

# ARTnews

OCTOBER 2013

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New**

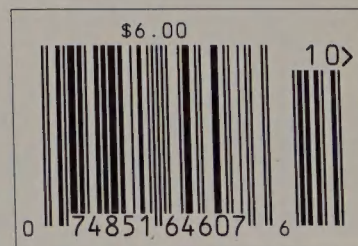


**How Hopper  
Created  
*Nighthawks***

**China's  
Growing  
Auction Giant**

**Wyeth  
Family's  
High Point**

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**to be a**

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curated by Jason Andrew

organized in collaboration with Norte Maar

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Viola Frey

Hermine Ford

Nancy Grossman

Elizabeth Murray

Pat Steir

Judith Murray

Jennifer Bartlett

Lynda Benglis

Hung Liu

April Gornik

Shirin Neshat

Tamara Gonzales

Ghada Amer

Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson

Jane Lee

Yin Xiuzhen

Julia K Gleich

Zhang Hui

Austin Thomas

Hideaki Kawashima

Yto Barrada

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Zanele Muholi

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Miya Ando

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OCTOBER 9–NOVEMBER 22, 2013

# *Miquel Barceló*

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Photo of Miquel Barceló in his Paris studio. Photo © Xavier Forcioli, 2013



30th Anniversary Exhibition  
Deborah Butterfield  
October—November, 2013



*Half Moon*, 2013, unique cast bronze with patina (wood and armature state), 93 x 101 x 44 inches

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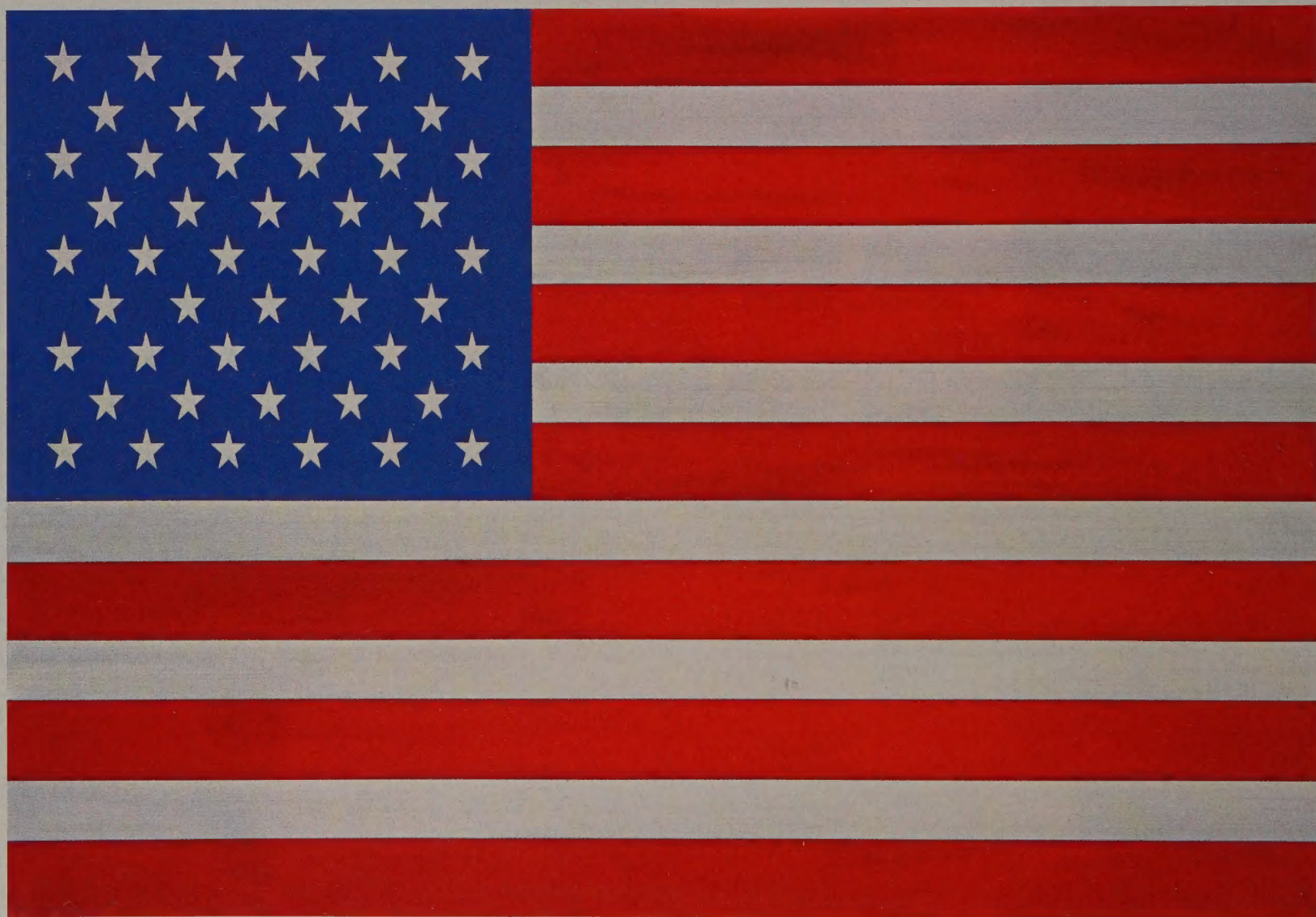
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## Autumn Auctions 2013

- 12 Oct. Berlin Sale (in Berlin)  
15 Nov. Furniture, Porcelain, Silver, Jewellery  
16 Nov. Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures 15<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> C.  
26 Nov. Photography  
26 Nov. Modern Art  
27 Nov. Contemporary Art  
6–7 Dec. Asian Art

Catalogues upon request and online

**Eberhard Havekost.** Back to the flag. 2007  
Oil on canvas, 107 x 154 cm. Sale 27 November





# erik benson: *Sleep Walking*

September 26–October 25, 2013

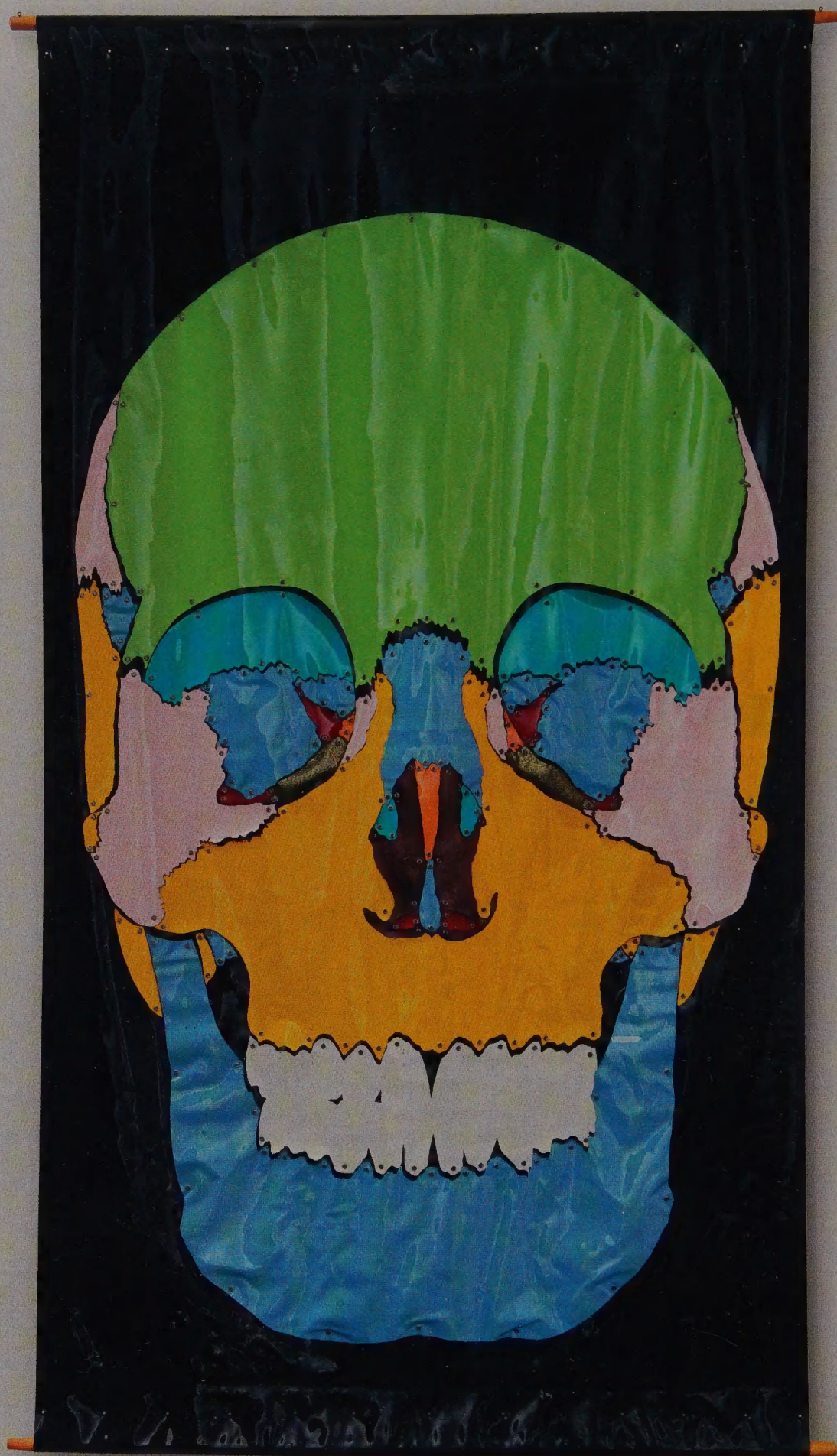


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Erik Benson (b. 1974)  
*Bookmen*, 2013 (detail)  
Acrylic on linen over panel  
30 by 40 inches (76.2 by 101.6 cm)





Kiki Kogelnik  
Frieze Masters  
Booth S12

Gallery Show  
Frieze London  
Booth C5

Jeppe Hein  
Frieze Sculpture Park



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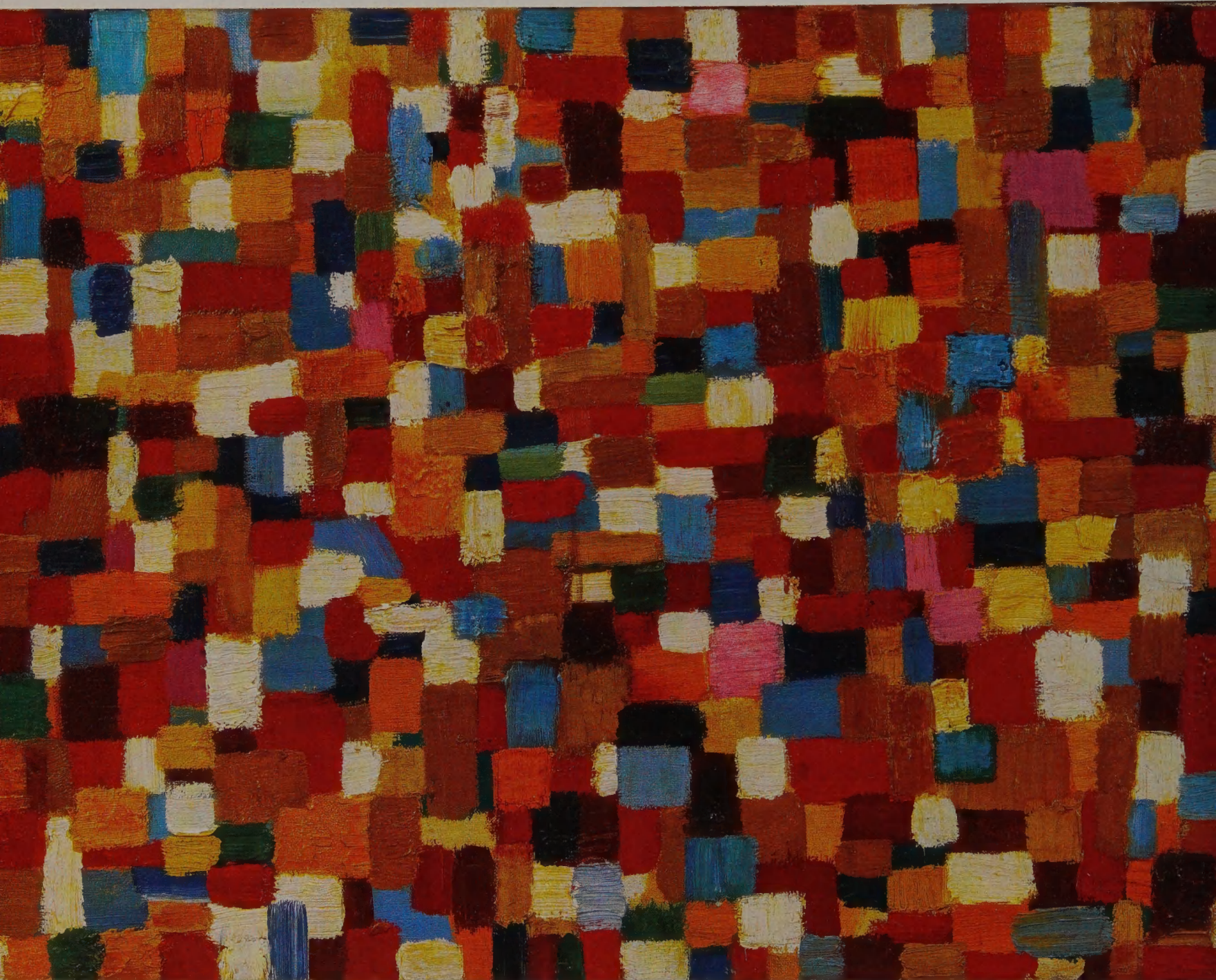
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October 17 - November 23, 2013

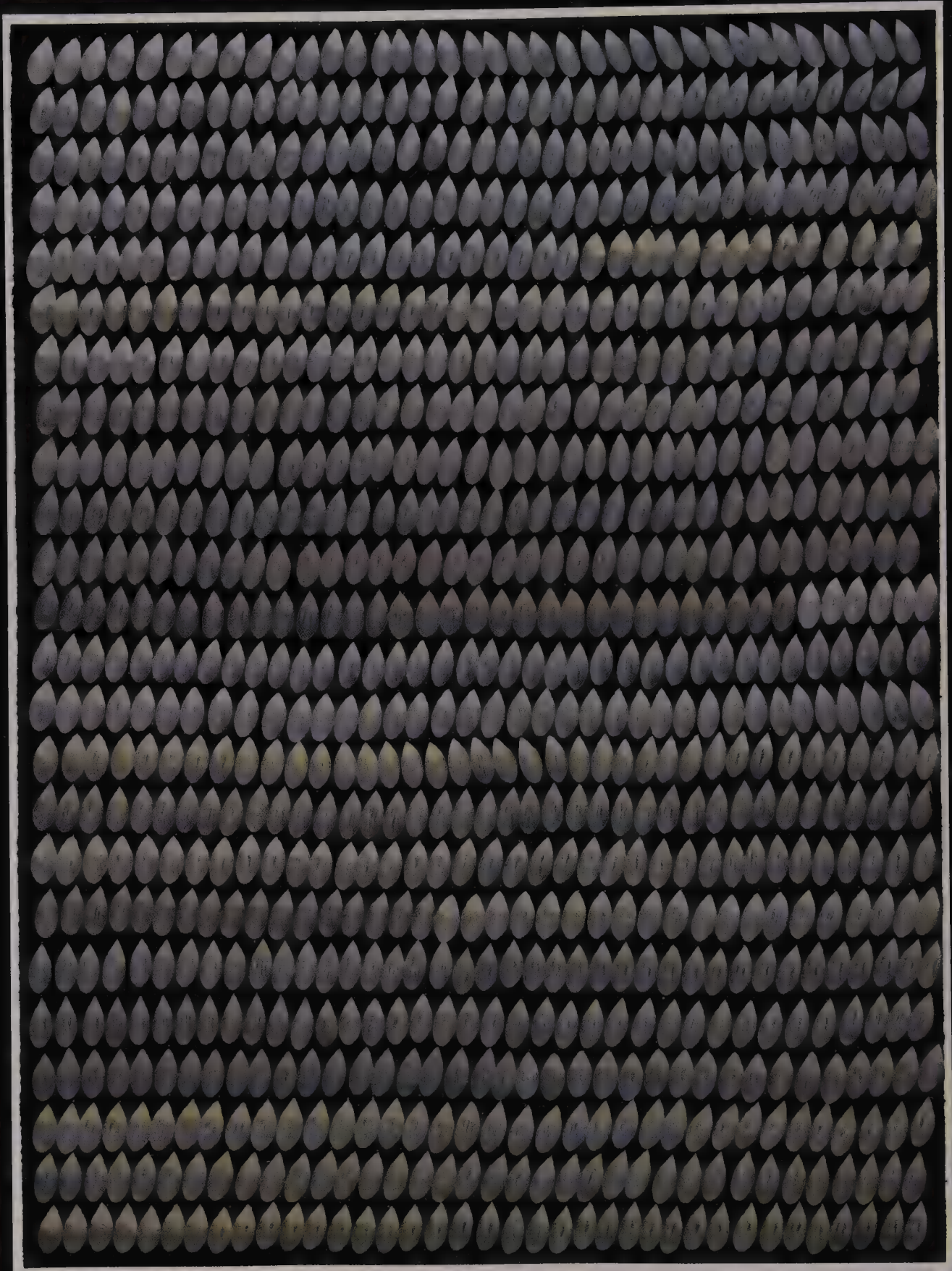




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*Dream Flowers*, 2013, oil on canvas, 51 x 76 inches (diptych), signed and dated lower left: "Bill Scott 13"

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"Beyond II," 2013, Ottchil (Asian Lacquer) on canvas, 20 1/2" x 28 1/4"

## Posoon Park Sung

*Beyond*

Paintings

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11 October–9 November 2013

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*Rio/Show Cancelled*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24 inches

# DAVIS CONE

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## Upcoming Auctions

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October 8	Arts of the Samurai
October 16	Fine Books & Manuscripts
October 17	Fine Jewelry
October 21	Made in California: Contemporary Art
October 22	Prints & Multiples
October 28	Fine European Furniture
October 29	Photographs
November 5	Impressionist & Modern Art
November 6	European Paintings
November 12	Contemporary Art

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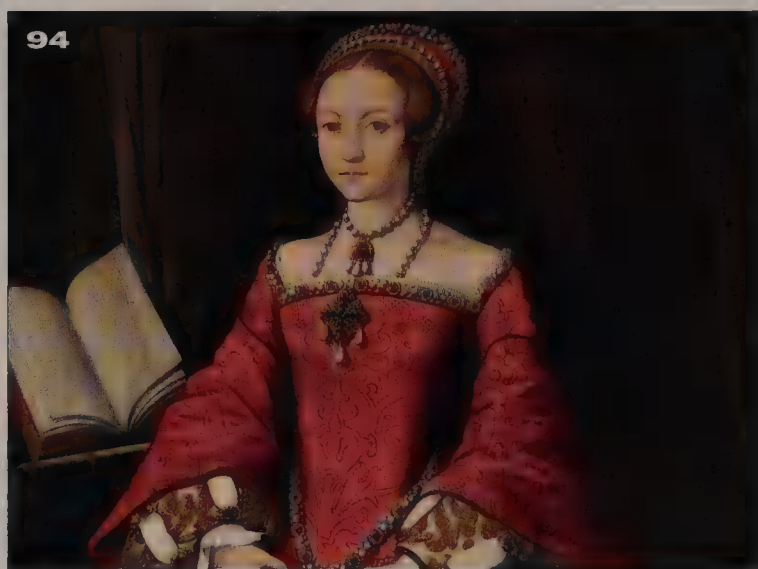
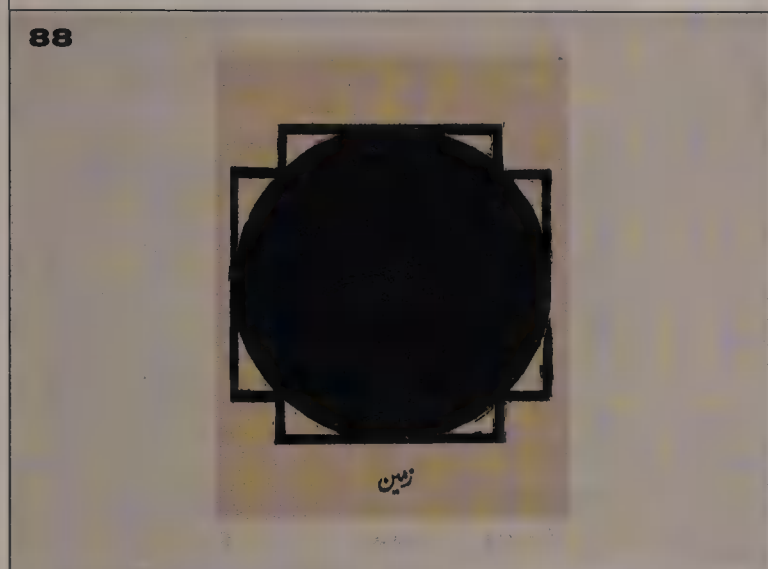
Camille Pissarro (1830-1903)  
Le jardin de Maubuisson, Pontoise, la mère Belette, 1882  
oil on canvas  
\$1,500,000 - 2,000,000  
Property from the John Flanigan Trust  
To be offered November 5



October 2013

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www.artnews.com



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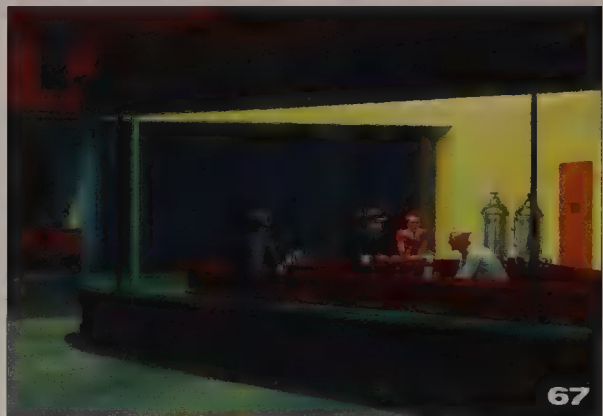
How Edward Hopper Storyboarded *Nighthawks*: Drawings at the Whitney reveal the step-by-step process the artist used to create his iconic painting of a New York diner at night **Robin Cembalest**

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**COVER** Nam June Paik, *Untitled (Robot)*, 1992, single-channel video in robot-shaped assemblage of televisions, radio- and stereo-system parts and metal hardware, with additions in paint, 42½ x 27⅞ x 14⅝ inches. ©Nam June Paik Estate/Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., gift to the Nam June Paik Archive from the Nam June Paik Estate. See story, page 76

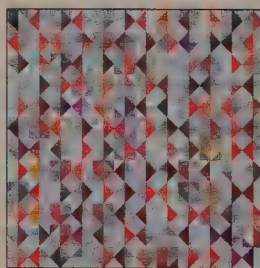
## 100 Reviews

## NEW YORK



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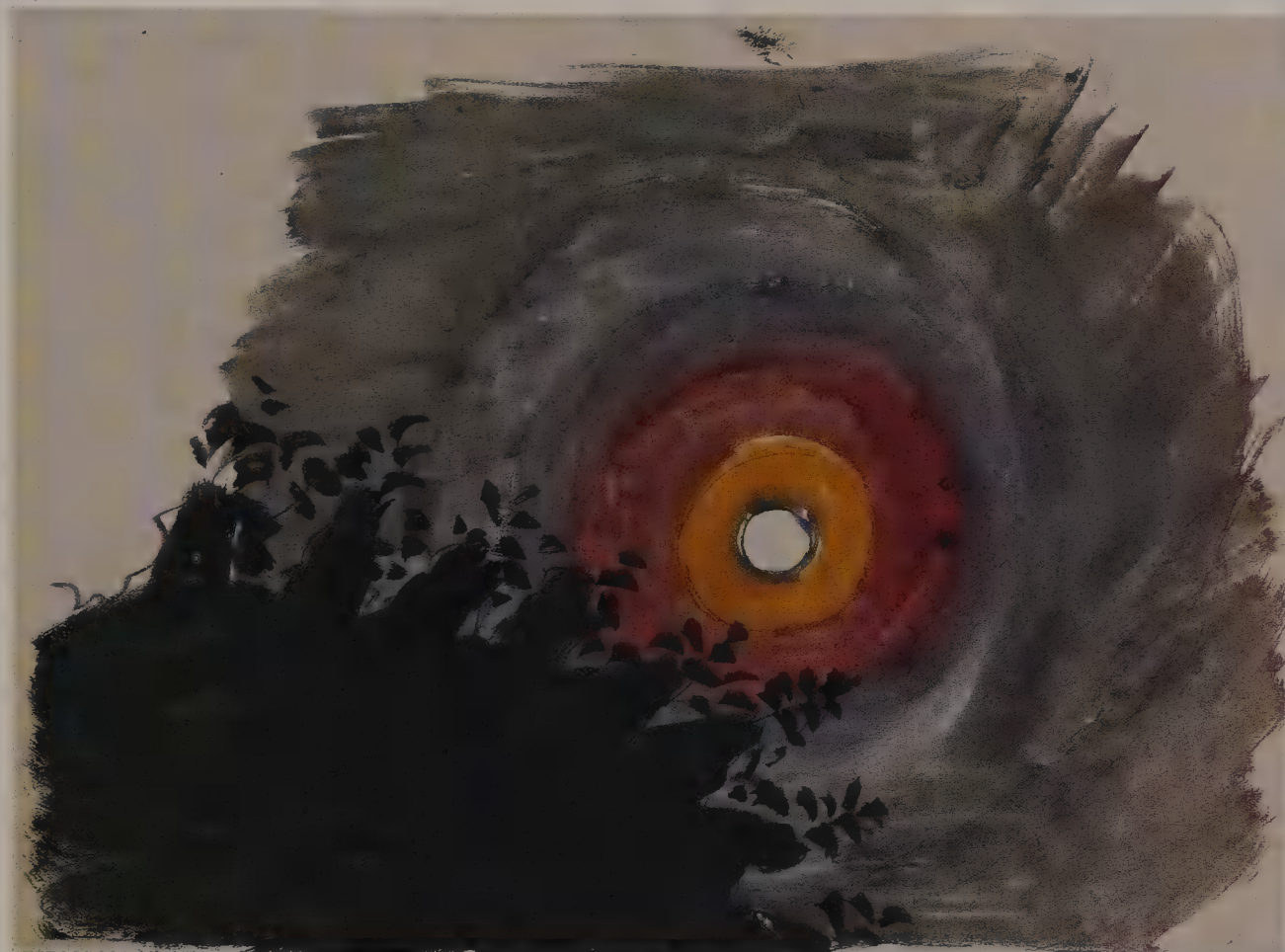
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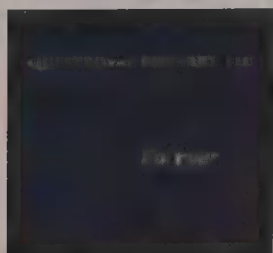


Charles Burchfield (1893–1967) *Three Ringed Moon*, 1916

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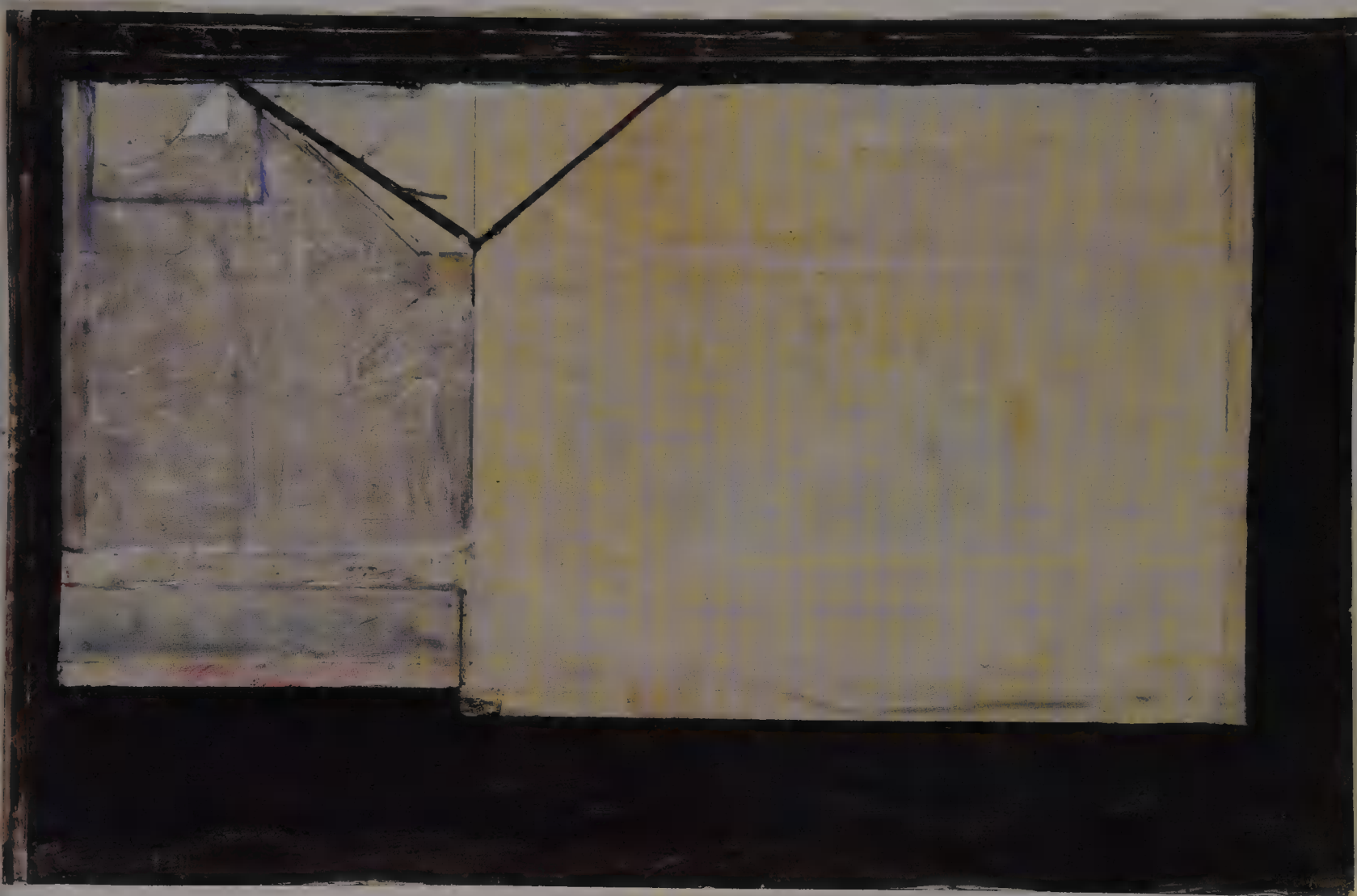
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IMAGE: What Do You See? [Detail] 2013 © 2013 Sophie Calle. Photo: [unintelligible]  
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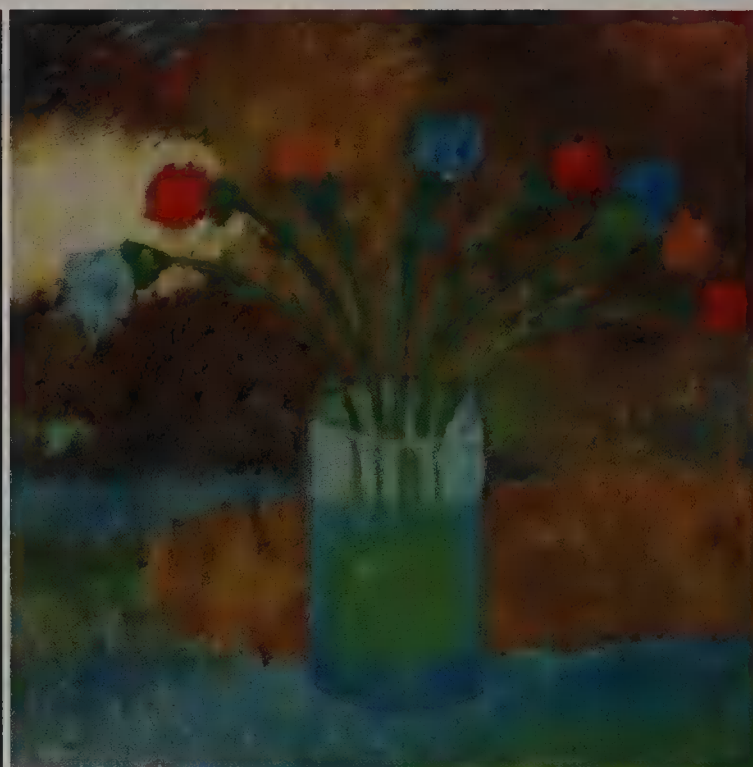
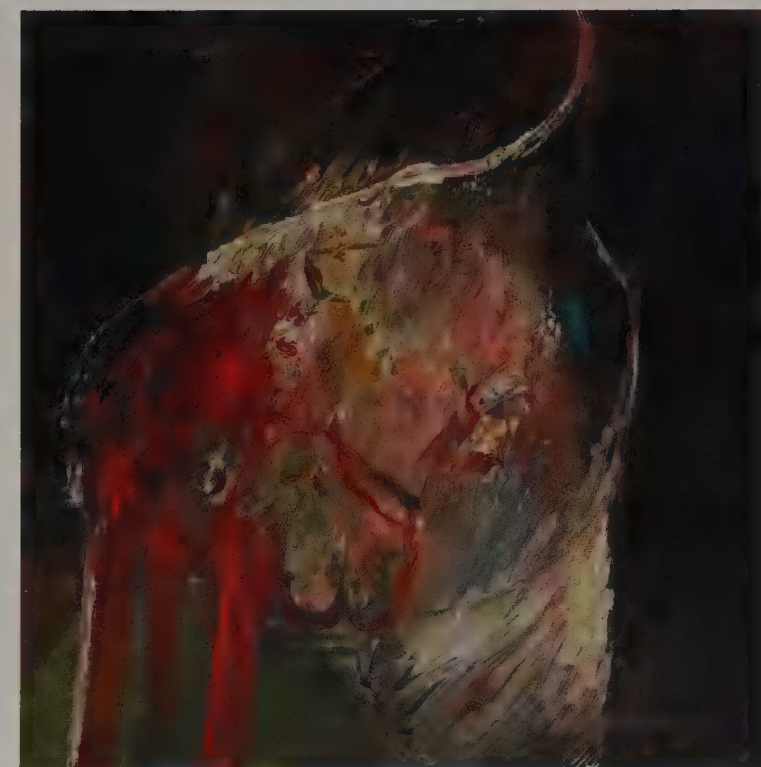
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Clint Jukkala, *Oracle*, 2013, acrylic and oil on canvas, 20" x 24"

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## Taking Yoga Seriously

Few of the millions of people who practice yoga understand its history or its mysterious origins, but an exhibition coming to the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery is sure to deliver some enlightenment.

Organized by **Debra Diamond**, associate curator of South and Southeast Asian art, "Yoga: The Art of Transformation" looks at yogic practices through 2,000 years' worth of depictions, with ancient temple statuary, miniature paintings, and chakra charts, as well as films, books, and photographs from South Asia's British-colonial period. Highlights include a fifth-century Indian tile portraying bony ascetics and a 1938 film of **T. Krishnamacharya**, the grandfather of modern yoga.

This is the first exhibition to study yoga as a visual metaphor spanning centuries, from its spiritual roots—found in Jain, Buddhist, Sufi,

and Hindu traditions—to its current status as a global exercise technique.

With yoga studios popping up in cities throughout the United States, the Smithsonian decided to tap into the discipline's popularity in a practical way. The museum collaborated with *Yoga Journal* and the Yoga Alliance to launch its "Together We're One" campaign in May, raising more than \$175,000—well over its \$125,000 goal—on the crowdfunding website Razoo. That money supplements costs for shipping, publications, and public programming (including yoga classes) during the course of the show, which runs from October 19 to January 26. So don't be surprised to see museum visitors engaged in downward dog and sun salutations in the coming months, hopefully bringing a degree of spiritual awareness to Washington, D.C.

—**Barbara Pollack**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP A film still showing yoga master T. Krishnamacharya in 1938. *The Prince in Danger*, from *The Magic Doe Woman* (Mrigavati), attributed to Haribans, 1603–4. A marble statue of a Jina, an enlightened being in the Jain tradition, dated 1160.



## Speaking in 3-D

"How comfortable is the term 'comfort'?" asks **Ron Labaco**, a curator at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. His question is in reference to the 2010 creation *Brain Wave Sofa* by **Lucas Maassen** and **Dries Verbruggen** from the Belgian design team **Unfold**. For the piece, Maassen used an electroencephalogram (EEG) to monitor his brain waves while he closed his eyes and thought of the word "comfort." Software translated the data into a three-dimensional image, and the designers programmed a computerized milling machine, called a CNC mill, to carve a foam replica of that image to use as the foundation for the couch.

*Brain Wave Sofa* is one of more than 100 pieces featured in "Out of Hand: Materializing the Postdigital." Opening at MAD on October 16, the exhibition showcases works of art, fashion, furniture, and architecture that have been constructed with 3-D printing and CNC milling devices.

Some of the most dynamic pieces allow visitors to experience firsthand how these technologies work. For **François Brument's** *Vase #44* (2009), museumgoers are encouraged to speak into a microphone that uses a special algorithm to translate a voice into an image of a vase. The height, width, and texture of the vase are determined by the speaker's volume and the duration of speech. **Tim Knapen** collaborated with Unfold to create a virtual pottery wheel for the interactive piece *l'Artisan Électronique* (2010). Sensors enable participants to manipulate a simulated mound of clay on the spinning wheel, and then a



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Frank Stella's *K. 162*, 2011, resin and steel. Richard Dupont's *Untitled (5)*, 2008, pigmented polyurethane resin. Lucas Maassen and Dries Verbruggen's *Brain Wave Sofa*, 2010, CNC-milled polyurethane foam, felt, and wood.



ceramic 3-D printer will generate their creations.

Even though these high-tech artworks are incredibly contemporary, several pieces derive from 19th- and 20th-century art history. For **Nick Hornby's** 2010 *I never wanted to weigh more heavily on a man than a bird* (*Coco Chanel*), the British artist used a computer-controlled hotwire

to combine **Brancusi's** *Bird in Space* and **Rodin's** *The Walking Man* into one sculptural mash-up. And for the sculpture *Perfect Forms*—begun in 2010 and exhibited for the first time in this show—**Barry X Ball** employed 3-D scanning and sculpting techniques to create a highly refined mirror image of **Umberto Boccioni's** *Unique Forms of*

*Continuity in Space*.

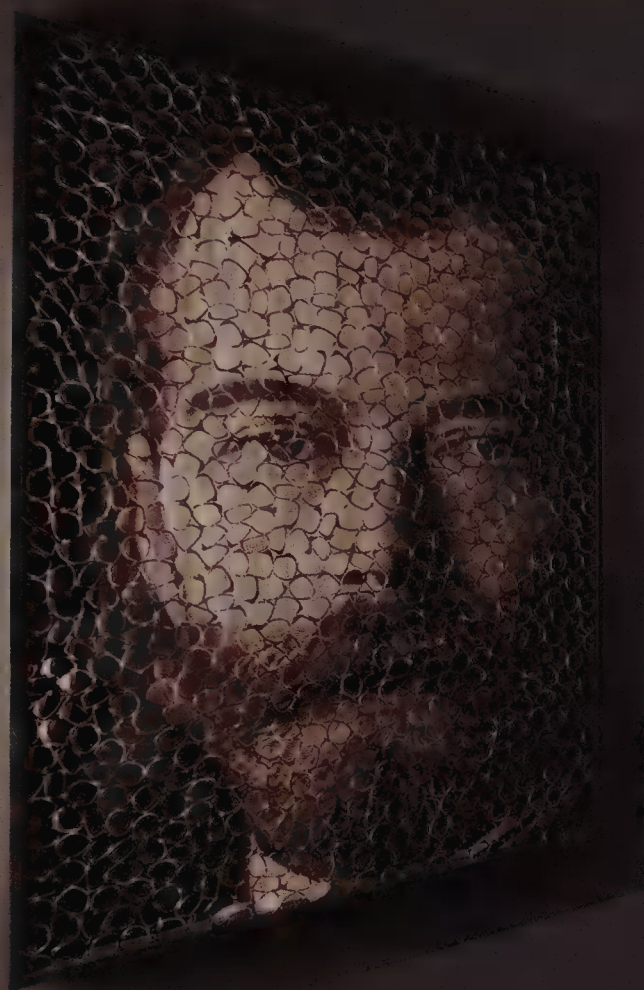
By including such a wide range of objects, Labaco hopes to demonstrate that 3-D scanners, 3-D printers, and CNC mills have become more accessible to the general public. "This technology, which seems so futuristic, has actually been in use in the last decade," he says. "It's all around."

—Stephanie Strasnick



DAVID DATUNA

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## Urban Outfitter

"It's a glistening, swarming aggregate of details that all scream out at you and crowd together—street signs, smoke plumes, people climbing stairs, flashes of electricity," says curator **Anna Vallye** of **Fernand Léger's** *The City* (1919). "This painting really captures the chaos, density, and energy of the metropolitan street." The monumental work is at the racing heart of the new exhibition "Léger: Modern Art and the Metropolis," which opens October 14 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Léger painted *The City* in Paris during a feverishly productive year that followed his stint in the French Army during World War I. "After the war, he redefines his artistic approach in a new confrontation with the environment of the city, including its popular and commercial arts," says Vallye, who organized the show. "So, the exhibition is all about encounters—between painting and the arts of mass urban culture, as well as between Léger and other artists, designers, filmmakers, and poets in Paris in the 1920s." The approximately 160 works on view include those by Léger, as well as his modernist contemporaries such as **Piet Mondrian**, **Theo van Doesburg**, **Sonia Delaunay**, and **Francis Picabia**.

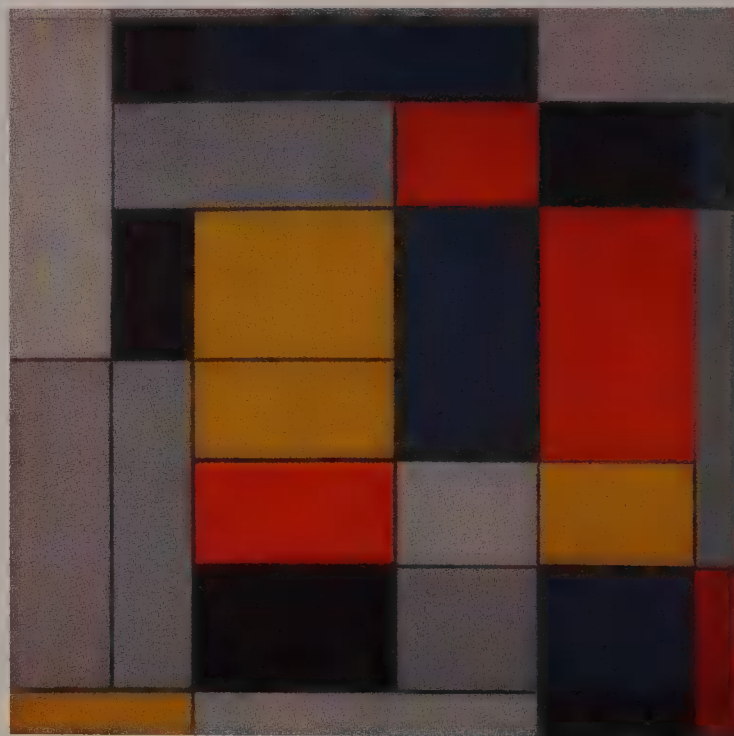
Three thematic sections reveal Léger as a master multitasker determined to dissolve the boundaries between creative disciplines. "Publicity" positions his poster designs, including one for the 1922 film *La Roue*, alongside advertisements by **Cassandre**

and **Jean Carlu**. Léger liked to play with language and typography, but he also had a knack for bringing other people's words to life through illustration, as seen in *The End of the World, Filmed by the Angel Notre Dame*, a 1919 screenplay turned novel by the modernist poet Blaise Cendrars that Léger enhanced with drawings on nearly every page.

Then there are Léger's avant-garde set designs. The exhibition explores how he applied his signature bold geometry and flattened perspectives to stage and screen productions, including commissions for the Ballet Suédois, a more radical (if short-lived) rival to the Ballets Russes. "He envisioned the stage and the performers as a unified spectacle that almost feels like a giant, moving painting come to life," Vallye explains.

"One of the central concerns of Léger's work was how to make painting reach

*The City*, 1919, by Fernand Léger.



*No. VI / Composition No. II*, 1920, by Piet Mondrian.

out beyond its own confines while remaining a painting," the curator adds, referring to a third section about Léger's relationships to architects such as **Le Corbusier**. Another friend, artist **Gerald Murphy**, whose Cubist-influenced painting *Razor* (1924) is in the

show, was dazzled by Léger as much for his artistic output as his unique perspective. "Léger talked constantly about the visual world," Murphy once said. "He saw and remarked on everything, and he made you see it, too."

—Stephanie Murg



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## Dizzy Spells

In 2010, when **Jamie Wyeth** heard that the Shelburne Museum in Vermont was planning an exhibition around the predilection for unusual vantage points displayed by three generations of Wyeths in their art, he was inspired to paint *Spindrift*, an aerial depiction of his island home off the coast of Maine. The show grew out of a conversation that took place a decade ago between **Andrew** and **Betsy Wyeth** and the Wyeth family's main conservator, **Joyce Hill Stoner**, about doing an exhibition on "aerial viewpoints," Stoner says. "So when the Shelburne asked me to curate a show—and they have the marvelous *Soaring*—it all came together."

The result is "Wyeth Vertigo," up until October 31 and comprising nearly 40 works by Andrew, his son Jamie, and Andrew's father, **N. C. Wyeth**, that document what Shelburne director **Thomas Denenberg** calls their "penchant for extreme perspectives—looking up, down, in, and out of unusual spaces." The show's centerpiece is Andrew's *Soaring* (1942–50), a tempera-on-Masonite painting of a life-size turkey buzzard with a 5-foot wingspan circling above two other buzzards and rolling Pennsylvania farmland far below. "It is meticulous, ominous, and a startling document of Cold War–visual culture," says Denenberg.

Other highlights by Andrew include *Winter Fields* (1942), a worm's-eye vignette of a dead crow in a field, and *Wolf Moon* (1975), an aerial survey of the artist's famous farmhouse in Chadds

Ford, Pennsylvania. Wyeth patriarch N. C., who launched the family tradition of unusual vantage points and strong angles, is represented here by numerous bird's-eye views, notably *Lobsterman Hauling Trap* (1927) and *Dark Harbor Fishermen* (1943), depicting Maine fishermen at work. Jamie, who paints more like his grandfather than his father, utilizes both sky-high and ground-level perspectives. In addition to *Spindrift*, the show includes his elevated viewpoints in *The Islander* (1975) and *Gull in Flight, Shrieking* (2006/2009), and his upward-tilting *Comet* (1997).

Stoner, who has studied the Wyeths for years, was surprised that "the more we looked, the more we kept turning up so many additional examples of vertiginous views." The pieces "create a sense of unease," adds Denenberg, which, "at times, can be quite dizzying."

—Stephen May

TOP TO BOTTOM Andrew Wyeth, *Soaring*, 1942–50. Jamie Wyeth, *Spindrift*, 2010. N. C. Wyeth, *Dark Harbor Fishermen*, 1943.







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## Dancing on the Walls

**Bruno Tonioli**, the rumbustious judge on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, is known for his quick one-liners. He described octogenarian **Cloris Leachman**'s moves as floating about with "the imposing presence of Battleship Geriatrica," while comparing **Billy Ray Cyrus**'s cha-cha to a "crazy bear lost in a swamp." Along with *So You Think You Can Dance*, this televised talent show is a 21st-century equivalent to *American Bandstand*, says cultural historian and curator **Amy Henderson**.

Photographs and publicity posters from these programs and many more are featured in the exhibition "Dancing the Dream," opening October 4 at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., which pays homage to the swings and sways of modern American dance. Henderson, who previously curated shows on **Katharine Hepburn** and **Elvis**, has organized works from the museum's vast collection of portraits of nimble-footed personalities such as **Lady Gaga**, **Gypsy Rose Lee**, and **Mikhail Baryshnikov**. At the heart of the project is the search for new dance-related imagery, Henderson says, "as opposed to cultural baggage and the import of tradition that holds forth in Europe."

The exhibition is thematically arranged around different facets of American culture, both high and low. The opening section about Broadway begins in the late 19th century, with **Jules Chéret**'s vibrant lithograph



TOP Robert Mapplethorpe's *Bill T. Jones*, 1985.  
ABOVE Edward Steichen's *Martha Graham*, 1931.

of modern-dance pioneer **Loie Fuller**, and ends with **Paula Scher**'s 1996 poster for *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*. There are also nods to avant-garde choreographers by way of an **Andy Warhol** screenprint of **Merce Cunningham** in motion, a **Robert Mapplethorpe** photograph of **Bill T. Jones** twisting his limbs, and an **Arnold Newman** portrait of **Twyla Tharp** posed before a floating table. Another section brings together posters and photos from iconic Hollywood films ranging from *West Side Story* and *Cabaret* to *Dirty Dancing* and *Black Swan*.

Henderson notes that today's cultural obsession with the spectacle of music and movement may have spawned from MTV. This is highlighted in the exhibition by **Jeri Heiden**'s poster for **Madonna**'s *Vogue* album and **Alberto Tolot**'s ad for **Paula Abdul**'s *Shut Up and Dance* (both from 1990). Then there's the *Bad*-era holographic poster of **Michael Jackson**, whose music videos influenced not just dance but also a generation of fashion trends.

Finally, "Dancing the Dream" looks to the Internet, with QR codes on the museum walls that link viewers' smartphones to YouTube videos of flash mobs, wedding festivities, and other examples of amateurs and celebrities showcasing their dance skills. Together with the TV dance competitions, Henderson explains, digital media encourages "the remarkable hope everyone harbors that they, too, have talent."

—Harry J. Weil





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# Rocking Bowie

**Tony Oursler** is good at keeping secrets. When the acclaimed multimedia artist was asked by rock icon **David Bowie** to direct the first video for Bowie's latest album, *The Next Day*, he made sure everything was under wraps.

"I had a very small team to work on the 'Where Are We Now?' video, and the only 'wild card' in and out of the studio was my son's babysitter, who is a huge Bowie fan," Oursler says. "I didn't want to be responsible for a leak." So, he asked everyone involved to swear to secrecy. The final video features Bowie and Oursler's wife, artist **Jacqueline Humphries**, as conjoined twins—their faces projected on one of Oursler's trademark figurative sculptures sitting on a worktable in his New York studio.

Over in London, **Victoria Broackes**, a curator in the department of theater and performance at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), was "completely surprised" by the release of Bowie's album. For two years, she'd been organizing "David Bowie is," the visual survey of the musician's half-century-long career—culled from his extensive archives—that is currently showing at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Toronto until November 27. "I had to quickly add something about it to the exhibition," she says. "Fortunately, I obtained the puppets upon which Bowie's head is projected in Oursler's video."



ABOVE David Bowie and William S. Burroughs in 1974. The photograph was taken by Terry O'Neill and hand-colored by Bowie. BELOW A striped bodysuit designed by Kansai Yamamoto for Bowie's *Aladdin Sane* tour in 1973.



Although Bowie's archives contain approximately 75,000 items, Broackes knew where to start: "With stage costumes," she says. "There are some immediately recognizable ones, but there aren't hundreds of them. So that was a good place to begin."

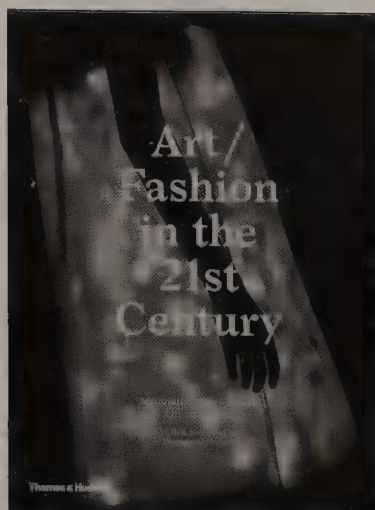
"David Bowie is" also draws attention to the art-world figures who have been Bowie's collaborators or inspirations. One is **Andy Warhol**, to whom Bowie paid homage on his 1971 album *Hunky Dory*. "To illustrate this broader context, the V&A borrowed a Warhol from the Tate," Broackes ex-

plains. The AGO is displaying its Warhol diptych *Elvis I and II* (1963–64) for its version of the show.

"David is as much a visual artist as he is a sonic artist—it's a synthesis for him," says Oursler, who collaborated with Bowie several times prior to the music video. "He did performances for my installations throughout the years, and I noticed that David looks more like himself through a camera than he does in real life. He was somehow born to be a media entity."

Bowie's own draftsmanship is also on display in the exhibition. One of Broackes's archival discoveries is a complete set of storyboards for an unrealized film the musician was planning in the mid-'70s. "Bowie's clarity of vision was a revelation, as was his refusal to be pigeonholed by any kind of social or sexual constraints," Broackes says. "His influence is across the board. David Bowie is all around us." —**Bill Clarke**





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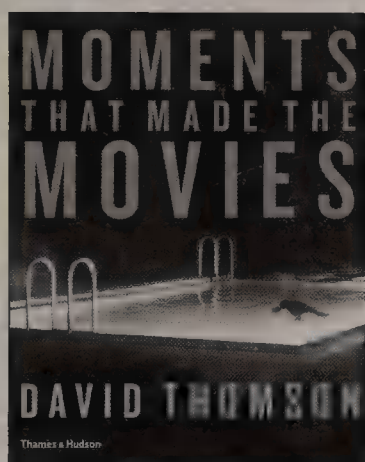
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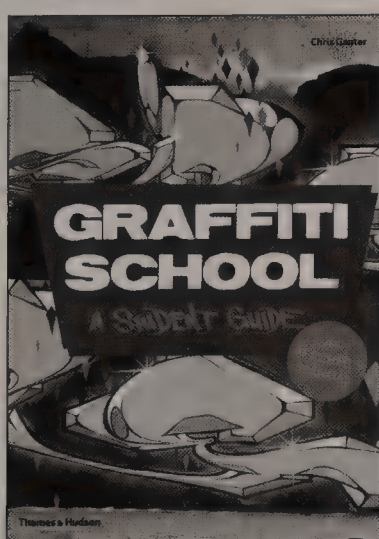
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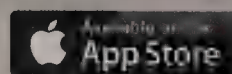
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## After the Storm

**Phong Bui**, artist, curator, writer, and publisher of the *Brooklyn Rail*, knows all too well about dealing with floods. As a child in Vietnam, Bui experienced deluges regularly and would sometimes have to decamp to higher ground to stay dry. Last October, when Hurricane Sandy hit New York, six feet of water consumed his ground-floor studio in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, where he had worked and stored his art and part of the *Brooklyn Rail* archives since 1992—destroying 25 years of production. “What’s sad about it is that I didn’t have a chance to document the work, so a good seven or eight years have no record,” Bui says.

So it was fitting that when **Jack Flam**, president of the Dedalus Foundation, wanted to mark Sandy’s first anniversary, he approached Bui to curate an exhibition that pays homage to the artists whose works, homes, and studios were damaged by the hurricane. “I felt it was important that the artwork can come together,” Bui says, “and to make this commemoration a festive activity, rather than somber and mournful.” He named the show “Come Together: Surviving Sandy.”

Opening October 20 and set across more than 100,000 square feet in Industry City, a former shipping terminal on the Brooklyn waterfront in Sunset Park, “Come Together” features dozens of artists and collectives. The majority of them—including the **Bruce High Quality Foundation**, **Dustin Yellin**, **Diana Cooper**, **Lisa Yuskavage**, and **Michael Joo**—were directly affected by Sandy. The rest—such as

**Alex Katz**, **Shirin Neshat**, **Superflex**, and **Chris Martin**—Bui selected to participate in solidarity with the storm victims. “If it is about Sandy alone, it’s no longer a festive affair,” Bui says.

Some works will serve as reminders of the waters that ravaged the art world. Katz is contributing a few paintings of menacing waves, and Superflex will show *Flooded McDonald’s*, a 2008 film of a faux McDonald’s dining room engulfed in water. Joo will display several sculptures that were in progress when the floodwaters reached a height of four feet inside his studio in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Cooper, who lost about 16 years of work when her Canal Street storage space became submerged under six feet of



**Phong Bui with a scale model of the upcoming exhibition “Come Together: Surviving Sandy.”**

water, plans to create a site-specific installation of red PVC pipes that wind around Industry City. She says the show will give artists and viewers a

chance to “reflect on the fragile world we live in and the fragility of being a creative person.”

Perhaps what’s most representative of the New York art community overcoming Hurricane Sandy is the image Bui chose to promote the exhibition: Bruce High Quality Foundation’s 2004 photo *Raft of the Medusa*, which depicts, in the style of **Théodore Géricault**’s legendary 19th-century painting, a group of artists as forlorn-yet-persevering survivors navigating the East River. BHQF will also create an installation based on *Medusa*. “Every time you have a natural disaster like this, it brings people together,” Bui says, “and you think of your relationship to one another differently.”

—Ann Binlot



**Production photo of the making of the 2008 film *Flooded McDonald’s* by Superflex.**



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OCTOBER 5<sup>TH</sup> - OCTOBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2013



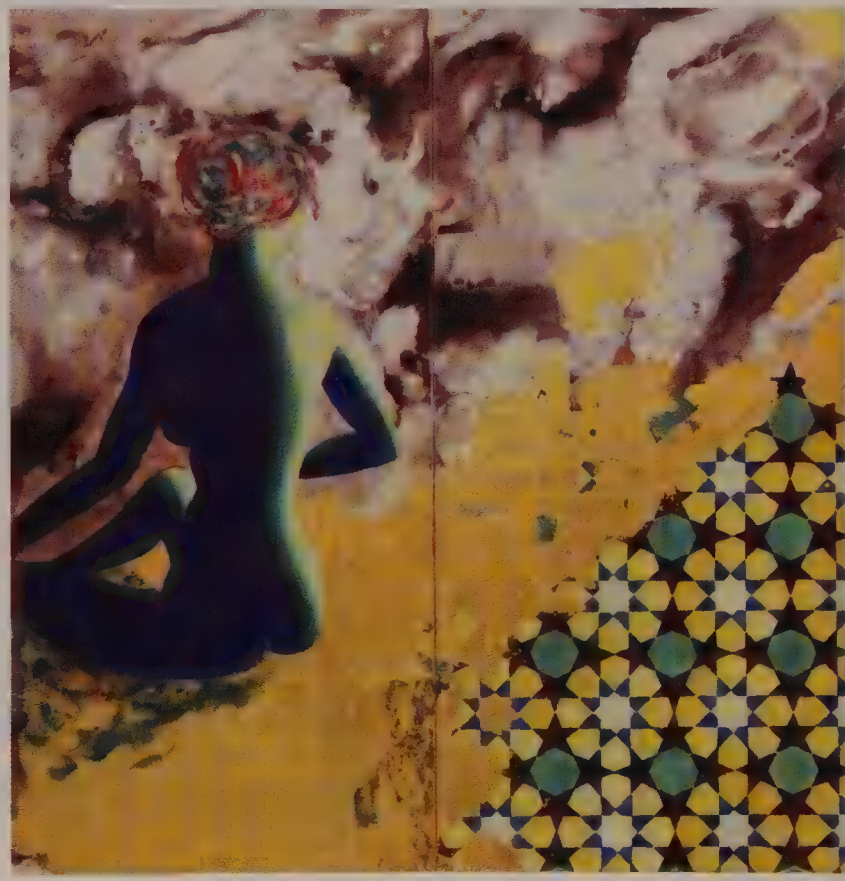
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## Russian Twist

In the bathrooms of the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, artists are elbow-deep in toilet tanks. "If you know **Marcel Duchamp's** urinal, you should also know its context," jokes **Kirill Svetlyakov**, the curator behind "The Museum of Modern Art: The Department of Labour and Employment," a group show focusing on the relationship between contemporary art and labor practices.

Before entering the exhibition, visitors pass through the hands-on Institute for the Re-training of Modernist Artists, where plumbers give artists tutorials on their craft. The Institute is the brainchild of **Alexander Melamid**, one of the founders of Russia's nonconformist art movement in the 1970s. To avoid becoming hostages to the gallery system, Melamid maintains, artists should learn a trade. After completing the course, the artists practice on the museum itself—to the unease of Tretyakov director **Irina Lebedeva**, who suggested they try out their burgeoning skills on model toilets.

The Tretyakov is known as a museum of Russian masterpieces, such as the Holy Trinity icon (1425–27) by **Andrei Rublev**. But "The Department of Labour" (up through February 1) aims to transform the space from a holy realm into "a place where art is actually manufactured," Svetlyakov says. The exhibition occupies the fourth floor of the Tretyakov's modernist branch on the bank of the Moscow River, and it is the unorthodox centerpiece of this year's Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. It picks up in the 1960s, when manufacturing in the Soviet Union began its slow collapse. Here,

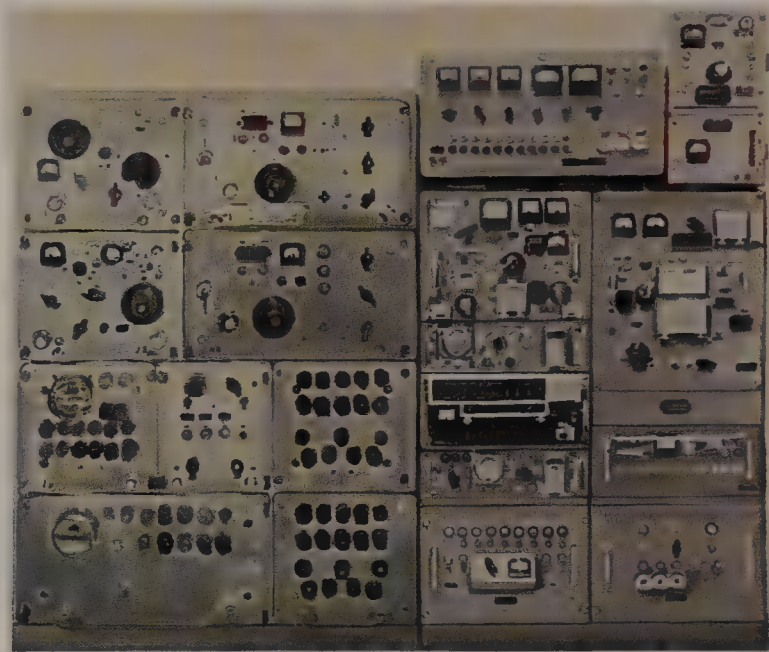


**ABOVE** An installation view of *Market "Labor"* by Arseniy Zhilyaev and Alexandr Dolgov. **RIGHT** *Tropospheric Communication Station*, 2013, an oil painting by Vlad Yurashko.

Soviet-era industrial designs, such as a triangular device for measuring air currents, appear alongside contemporary performance art, installations, and crafts engaged with science and factory production.

For his contributions to the show, **Anton Olshvang** traveled to factories in the Vladimirskaya region, using their machinery to create art objects; the sculptures he made at a cable factory range from keychain-size braids reminiscent of Twizzlers to metal columns standing several yards tall. Likewise, the celebrated Krasnodar-based artist collective **Recycle** has built a machine that forms sculptures out of soil.

The most socially biting works come in the exhibition's final section, which focuses on labor and the street.



In **Maxim Roganov's** installation *3D shawarma*, museumgoers enter a simulation of a kebab stand that has them adopt the role of seller, using joysticks to dole out food to volatile customers. And the installation *Market "Labor"* by **Arseniy Zhilyaev** displays the belongings of an engineer named **Alexandr Dolgov** who, to make a living in Russia's turbulent '90s, quit his job at a science institute and began importing

cosmetics from Europe. His old designs and new wares appear side by side in a trading tent.

It's unclear whether the Tretyakov's new plumbers will be taking their talents outside the gallery. But some, at least, are not opposed to the idea. "Why not?" says participating artist **Maria Arendt**. "A modern artist needs to know how to do everything."

—Joy Neumeyer



# Douglas K. Morris



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**Revenge**, 96 x 62 1/4, Oil on canvas, Signed & Dated, l.r., DKM, 2011

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## ARTnews Retrospective

### 100 Years Ago

Daphne Allen, the 14-year-old child, whose drawings and watercolors exhibit such an extraordinary power of imagination and felicity of expression, is holding her second exhibition at the Dudley Galleries. . . . Her mastery of color is as yet hardly developed, although her work in sepia is astonishingly mature. She has been likened to Fra Angelico for her simplicity and evident sincerity of expression, and although this may be somewhat florid "journalese," there is actually something in her work which recalls the great Florentine.

—*"London Letter,"* by L. G.-S., October 25, 1913

### 75 Years Ago

A solitary figure who followed his own precepts while the storms of successive art movements raged around him, Rouault developed a language of forms which served to express, on the one hand, his bitter condemnation of the creatures of society—the pathetic clown and those monsters of man's creation: the brazen prostitute and the corrupt lawyer. On the other hand, it served to express Rouault's melancholy belief in suffering—which he has protested is unfeigned—and his ardent search for a spiritual haven. Passion and asceticism are twin dynamos in his prints, as they are in his better known paintings. —*"Rouault as Master of Graphic Art,"* by Martha Davidson, October 8, 1938

### 50 Years Ago

All I could see was his arrogant claim to the expression of the seventeenth century without its body, his deviation, his denial of anything that I had understood to be of the essence of modern art. . . . Not only were [his images] figurative and illusionistic at a time when the drift was inexorably towards abstract art and even the most convinced figurative painters were obsessed with the flat surface, but they dealt with the human head in terms of its features, its grimaces and gestures. —*"Bacon: The paint of screams,"* by Andrew Forge, October 1963

### 25 Years Ago

In the old days, the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, and Whitneys established museums and kept them going with money out of pocket. Today, it's up to the trustees. Joseph V. Noble, director emeritus of the Museum of the City of New York and former vice-director for administration for the Metropolitan, has an axiom of trusteeship that he calls the Three Gs: "A trustee is expected to *give* money. A trustee, by using political and social muscle, is expected to *get* money. If a trustee can't do one or the other, then it's time to *get off* the board and let someone else sit." —*"What Price Glory?,"* by Paul Gardner, October 1988

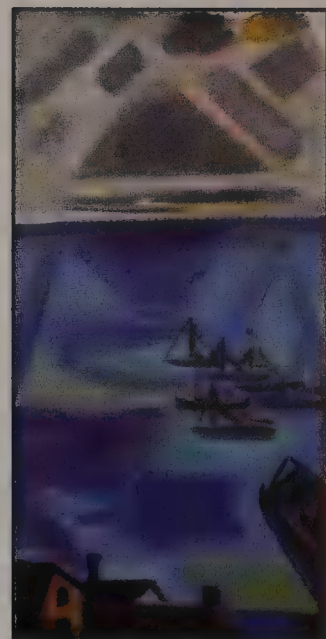
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A painting of a yellow school bus, viewed from a low angle, looking up at the front. The bus is yellow with black trim around the windows and doors. There are three red emergency lights on the roof. The windshield shows a reflection of the sky. The bus is parked on a red surface. The background is a clear blue sky.

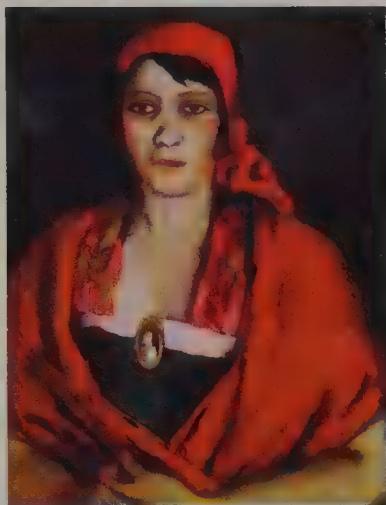
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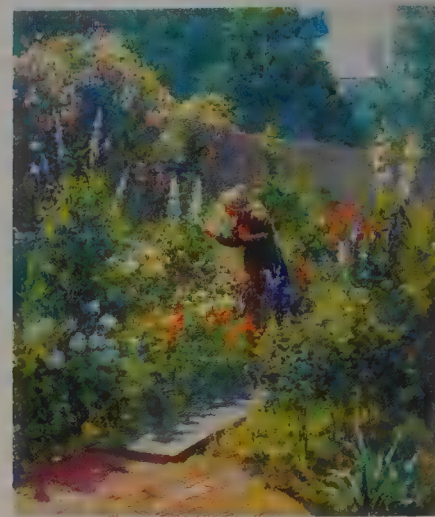




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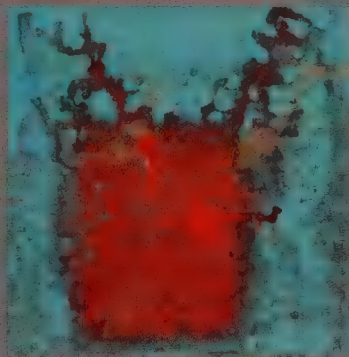
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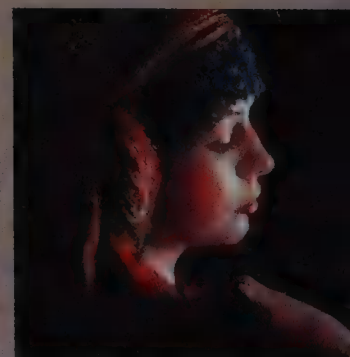
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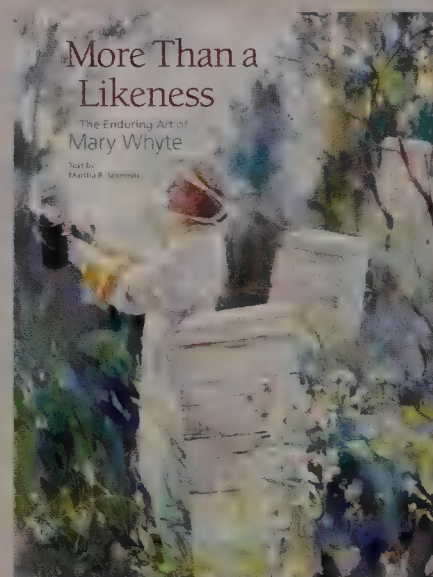
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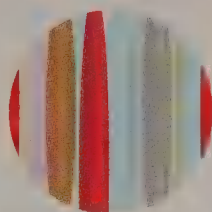
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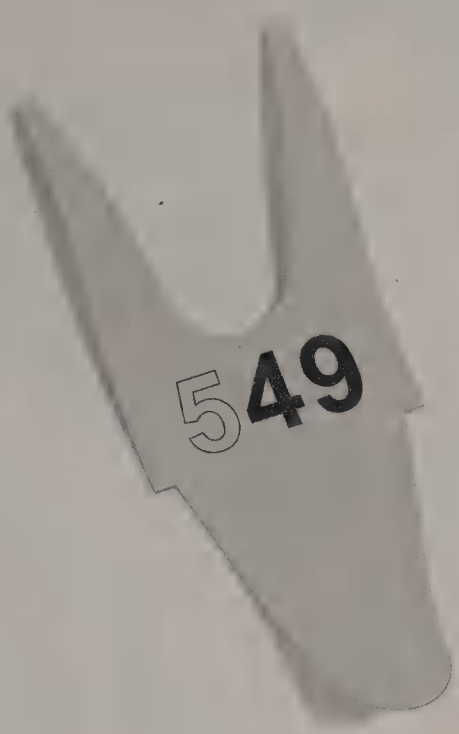
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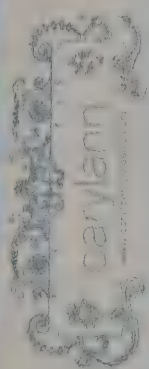


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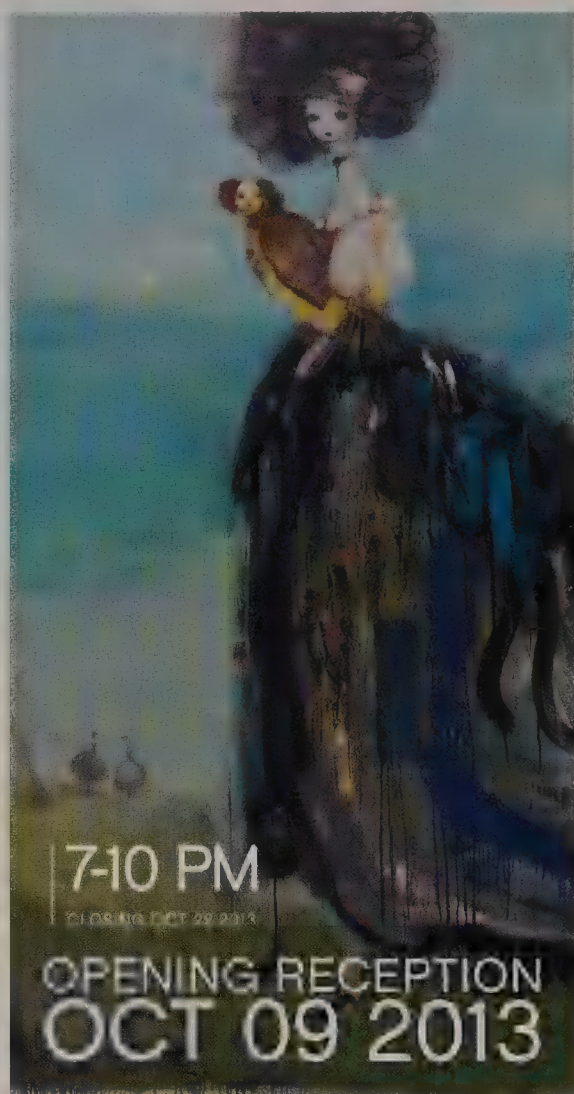
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# Building Bridges with the Biennale

**With its first official appearance at the Venice Biennale, the Vatican tries to connect with Catholics and nonbelievers alike, through contemporary art** **BY JUDITH HARRIS**

When the sovereign state of Vatican City inaugurated its first-ever Pavilion of the Holy See at the 55th Venice Biennale this past June, it stole the show from the 88 other exhibitor countries, which included nine fellow newcomers. But with passing weeks the excitement generated by the mere fact of a Vatican presence faded. The *Guardian* reported that, for some, the exhibition is “a kind of all-purpose spiritual mishmash,” and a reviewer on the art-technology website Rhizome dismissed it as “bland.”

In a way, this is unfair. Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, head of the Pontifical Council for Culture, and Micol Forti, director of the Vatican Museums’ contemporary art department, made courageous choices—and not only by taking on the art world on its own terms. The two had to walk a fine line in making a suitable esthetic statement while keeping an eye on costs. (The exhibition, which runs through November 24, is entirely financed by charitable gifts.) Above all, they eschewed a presentation of traditionally significant works of religious art—the crucifixion of Christ, Mary holding baby Jesus—in favor of “projecting into the future,” as Forti told *ARTnews*.

For Ravasi, the Biennale presents an opportunity to foster a discourse with nonbelievers, and with other states and cultures. Two years ago, while the Vatican was still on a Biennale waiting list, he arranged for a Holy See exhibition to be held on Church property outside the official Biennale premises at the Venice Arsenale. “We are trying to

reconstruct what has been essentially a divorce between art and faith,” Ravasi told *ARTnews* at that time. With Forti, he is already discussing possible themes for the Holy See pavilion at the 2015 Biennale.



This year’s three-part theme, “Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation,” is intended to illustrate the first eleven chapters of Genesis, and it also serves as a modern homage to Michelangelo’s five-centuries-old Sistine Chapel ceiling. Studio Azzurro, a three-man multimedia team from Milan, made an interactive installation for the “Creation” section. When a visitor touches a video projection on the floor, the artwork reacts by emitting sights and sounds that evoke the dawn of life. Through dramatic images of war and devastation by

renowned Czech photographer Josef Koudelka, “Un-Creation” (that is, destruction) demonstrates “man’s defiance of God’s plan,” Ravasi explains. “Re-Creation” is a display of abstract paintings and assemblages by Lawrence Carroll, an Australian-born artist who has lived for decades in the United States. He works in the mode of *arte povera*, which reuses cast-off objects.

These works are not conventionally religious, and they are meant more for meditation and reflection than inspiration, says Forti. “It is not liturgical art, and we did not ask the artists their religion. I doubt that anyone asked Leonardo da Vinci about his faith.”

Some within the Church, more accustomed to traditional expressions of the Catholic religion, have published online their outrage over the chosen artworks.

▲ **Studio Azzurro’s multimedia “Creation” installation for the Pavilion of the Holy See at the Venice Biennale.**

“But my feeling is that we are opening up an important dialogue,” says Carroll. “Consider the wars and conflicts. This is an invitation. A bridge must be built, and to have the Vatican involved is a wonderful symbol.” ■

*Judith Harris is the author of Pompeii Awakened: A Story of Rediscovery.*







# 'The Lion Tamer' of Design

**Wolfsonian museum director Cathy Leff brings an eclectic collection of art and design objects under control**

BY ELISA TURNER

While on a recent trip to Paris, Mitchell Wolfson Jr. was presented with a tempting opportunity: the chance to purchase the archives of a little-known Swiss architect for the collection of his Miami Beach museum, the Wolfsonian. Wolfson believed that Henri Fivaz's early 20th-century plans for the Théâtre des Champs Élysées in Paris, which were commissioned and then rejected, would provide essential insights into "modernity," a theme central to the Wolfsonian's holdings. But he needed confirmation. So he called on Cathy Leff, the museum's longtime director. "Yes, it's absolutely Wolfsonian," she said, and the purchase was made.

"Cathy makes sure I maintain a steady evolution and don't go off on tangents," Wolfson says. From the moment he met her, he adds, he could tell "she had a very good inner sense."

Leff, 62, grew up near Miami, in Hollywood, Florida. After moving to New Orleans, where she received a B.A. at Tulane University, she returned to Miami in 1973 to work in community development. At a party in the late '70s, she met Miami native Wolfson—a businessman, collector, and Wometco Enterprises heir who was then living between Europe and Miami, buying property. "Leff was a fun girl, vivacious and very hip," Wolfson recalls. "She loved to have a good time. I always wanted her to come and work for me." But it wasn't until some ten years after their initial meeting, when she was collaborating with urban planners to obtain federal grants for declining neighborhoods, that he invited her to his office for a chat.

As it turned out, Wolfson, too, was looking for ways to fortify the city as an

urban center—and, to Leff's surprise, he asked her point-blank to leave her current job and come work for him.

Though he couldn't articulate exactly what he wanted to do with his vast holdings of art and design (or why he was purchasing real estate in Miami), she remembers, "I knew he was a really brilliant guy, so I just jumped."

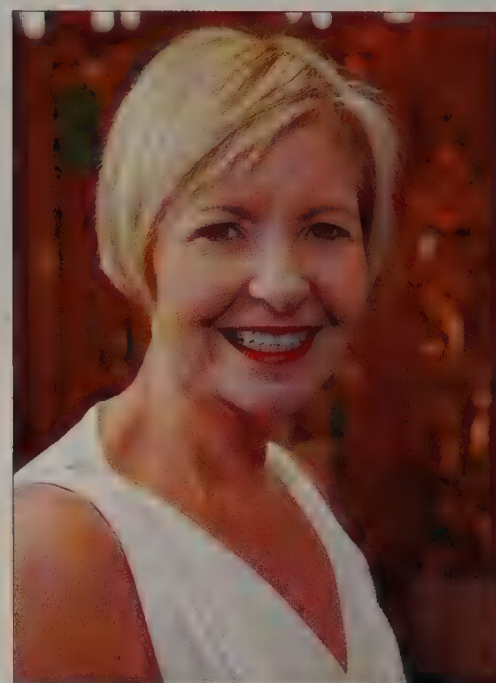
Impressed by Leff's extensive business experience, Wolfson initially hired her to manage his real-estate portfolio, but since then, she has worn many hats for him. In 1986, he'd established the *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, and three years later he appointed her as its publisher and executive editor. (The journal now belongs to the Wolfsonian's curatorial department.) The Wolfsonian opened to the public in 1995, and in 1997, Wolfson bequeathed his collection and a large Miami Beach building to the state of Florida, enabling the museum to operate as a research center of Florida International University. It was Leff who oversaw the transaction. And after working as interim director for a few years, she was tapped as museum director in 1998.

"Cathy was able to justify the Wolfsonian to the financial community," Wolfson recalls, "and especially to the university, which respects and trusts her. They understand she knows how to run a big organization like this one—which happens to be a laboratory for culture and esthetics."

With its library and research center, the Wolfsonian-Florida International University provides extensive historical and academic context for its eclectic collection of some 120,000 art and design works from the mid-19th century to

1945—in mediums including furniture, glass, ceramics, rare books, textiles, and medals. While those objects do include fine art, Leff says, "It's not art for art's sake. Our collection was never name-brand artists." Instead, she emphasizes, the Wolfsonian presents scholarship-supported exhibitions of historical artifacts that "reveal as much about our own time and culture as about theirs. Art and design continue to shape the human experience." And now, largely thanks to grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Florida International University has developed 19 courses and other academic programs based on the museum's collection.

In 1995, the museum's inaugural exhibition, "The Arts of Reform and Persuasion, 1885–1945," demonstrated the ways in which new technologies have been integrated into society. Toys produced in the 1930s, for example—such as a spaceship and high-speed train—reflected the period's appetite for ever-accelerating modes of transportation. This optimistic celebration of the effects of modernization on daily life was echoed in a household fan from ca. 1935, whose blades resemble an airplane propeller. Since that exhibition, the museum has frequently collaborated with other institutions to mine themes touched on by its collection. Co-organized with the Canadian Centre for



► Native Floridian Cathy Leff.



Architecture, for instance, the 2010 exhibition "Speed Limits" marked the centennial of Italian Futurism with over 200 works in various mediums, all of which explored and questioned the benefits of "increased speed" in domestic realms such as the kitchen or office.

In June, the Wolfsonian announced a major gift from Wolfson, including some 25,000 objects, rare books, works on paper, and archives, as well three floors of exhibition space in a building in downtown Miami. The new venue, which will serve as a satellite space to complement the main museum in Miami Beach, is slated to open this fall in time for Art Basel, Miami Beach. Also launching this fall is "Rebirth of Rome," a series of shows and programs focused on the esthetics of Italy in the decades between World Wars I and II. "Echoes and Origins: Interwar Italian Design" features applied arts and design objects, from furniture to ceramics to industrial products, that were created in the 1920s and '30s as the country struggled to define a unified national identity under Mussolini. And November brings "The Birth of Rome," an exhibition of Fascist architectural and urban planning projects from the 1930s and '40s.

The museum's programming usually merges history, art, and design, but Leff also hopes to continue research-based collaborations with contemporary artists. The first of these, an exhibition created by Paris-based artist Esther Shalev-Gerz after a residency at the museum, took place last winter. Titled "Describing Labor," the show was substantially inspired by the Wolfsonian's holdings, and explored the way labor has been depicted at various moments in the 20th century. It featured prints, paintings, sculptures, and rare periodicals from the collection, interspersed with some 25



▲ Esther Shalev-Gerz's photograph *Work for America*, 2012, from her show "Describing Labor" at the Wolfsonian.

newly created works of video, audio, and photography by Shalev-Gerz. It also included 19 glass objects depicting hammers and other iconic artifacts of labor, designed by the artist but executed by artisans of the Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio.

Under Leff's leadership, the Wolfsonian continues to expand into the public realm. Last December, the museum received a \$5 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation that will enable many of its holdings to be accessible online. A previous \$500,000 Knight grant helped fund "The Art of Illumination: Illuminating the Arts," a \$1 million light project whose installation got underway last January and is expected to be completed this month. Created by New York lighting design firm L'Observatoire

Internationale, the initiative envelops the Wolfsonian's 1927 Mediterranean Revival building in digital light shows and covers the exterior walls in 24/7 public programming, including large-scale digital reproductions of exhibitions and objects on view inside.

Petite and stylish, Leff favors Lucite jewelry and Japanese fashion, especially what she describes as "architectural costumes" by Issey Miyake. Her office is furnished with distinctive Wolfsonian pieces, such as a copper finial that once adorned New York's Woolworth Building. She reflects on how far the museum, and Miami itself, have come since her early days with Wolfson: "We are at the same inflection point the city is," she says, noting how she has witnessed the city's dramatic transformation into a destina-

tion for professionals from the Northeast, Europe, and Latin America—and its increasingly sophisticated audience for art and culture. "In my generation," she says, "everybody fled Miami. Now everybody wants to be here."

For Wolfson, Leff's enthusiasm and business skills have been part and parcel of the Wolfsonian's success. "She was really the lion tamer," he says, "and she made sure we had the necessary requirements to be attractive to the university and trustees." More important, he goes on, "she grew with the job—so now she understands the esthetic point of view."

As Leff remembers it, working at the Wolfsonian was not the career move she would have ever anticipated. "I always had plans," she says, "but the best things that always happened to me were the things unplanned. My plans were always hijacked by something better." ■

*Elisa Turner is the Miami correspondent for ARTnews.*



# Bringing the World to Queens

**A \$68 million expansion brings more exhibition space and a flashy new entrance to the historic Queens Museum**

**BY HILARIE M. SHEETS**

Most people en route to or from New York City's airports have probably noticed the Unisphere, the world's largest model globe, which was commissioned for the 1964–5 World's Fair and stands 12 stories tall in Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens. Many, though, might not know that the broad, low-slung building nearby, originally erected as the New York City Building for the 1939 World's Fair, has housed the Queens Museum of Art since 1972.

Next month, the institution completes a \$68 million expansion designed by London-based Grimshaw Architects. The extension doubles the institution's size and reorients its entrance toward the Grand Central Parkway, which announces the museum's name with a multicolored lighting system. "It is our firm belief that everyone in the city is going to know where we are after this," says Tom Finkelpearl, executive director of the museum, noting that a quarter-million people drive past it daily.

Situated in the most culturally diverse community in America, the Queens Museum will now welcome

visitors through a new 220-by-27-foot glass facade and usher them into a grand skylit central atrium. It will also open from the opposite side of the building onto the park, the second-most frequented park in the city, where the museum does extensive public programming. The museum was able to reclaim the 50,000-square-foot southern half of its building when an ice skating rink, installed there after the first World's Fair, moved to new quarters nearby in the park. "There was this incredible opportunity to take that space and fashion something around the way we see the museum operates," Finkelpearl says. "We have aspects of the museum that are like a community center, but we never had that central mixing place. You were always coming in the side door."

Besides activating the building as a gateway to the park, the expansion also introduces new spaces for exhibition. At the center of the new southern half of the museum is an open, wood-floored room for performances and exhibitions, set down three steps and defined overhead by a massive glass chandelier that reflects light from one of two huge skylights. For the museum's reopening, Mexican artist Pedro Reyes is creating a mock United

Nations assembly in this sunken living room, referencing the building's history as the actual site of the United Nations General Assembly from 1946 to 1950. But rather than solving the world's problems, the artist's 193 citizen representatives from UN member states will be on hand to provide marriage counseling, art therapy, and other kinds of dispute resolutions.

Also new are six airy galleries located around the perimeter of the performance space. Forthcoming exhibitions there include the sixth edition of the Queens International, the biennial for artists who live or work in Queens; a show of photographs by Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao that document the transformation of the museum's building since 2009; and the first solo museum show of Peter Schumann, founder and director of Vermont's radical Bread and Puppet Theater, active since the 1960s.

Historically, the most popular draw to the Queens Museum has been the New York City Panorama—a 9,335-square-foot architectural model of New York City that was commissioned for the 1964 World's Fair by Robert Moses, then the city's parks commissioner. That

*Hilarie M. Sheets is a contributing editor of ARTnews.*



► **Queens Museum director Tom Finkelpearl at the expansion's construction site.**



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work remains in place in the old half of the museum, but will be accessible directly from the new lobby, and some former gallery spaces surrounding it have been freed up to create eight studio spaces for a new artist residency program. "There will be educational opportunities with the artists in the building," says Finkelpearl, explaining that the residents have been selected from 400 applicants and will be highly visible to visitors. "Just the vibe of the artists changes the place completely."

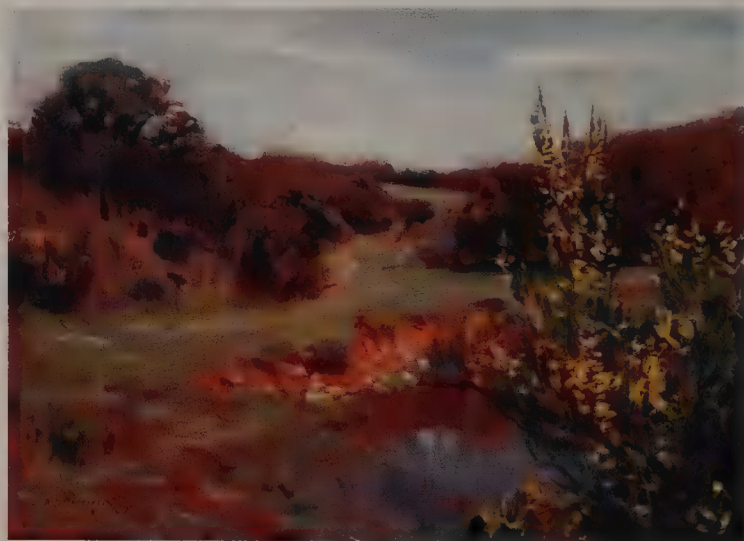
Looking to the future, Finkelpearl is talking with artists about creating monumental public artworks that will use the new glass facade and its lighting capabilities. "It's going to be a unique site, which will be experienced standing in front of the building and also by a million people every four days driving by in cars," he says. "It's like having Times Square kind of numbers for an artwork in Queens."



▲ A rendering of the museum's new glass facade when viewed from the Grand Central Parkway.

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# A True Minimalist

**Walter De Maria harnessed lightning, brass, earth, and more for his simple yet extravagant projects** **BY KIM LEVIN**

Walter De Maria, 77, whose work helped kickstart the Minimalist, Conceptualist, and Earthworks movements, died in his sleep on July 25. He was best known for *The Lightning Field*, an immense Earthwork that covers a rectangular area measuring one kilometer by one mile in western New Mexico with a grid of 400 tall stainless-steel rods. His two iconic works in New York's SoHo—*The New York Earth Room* (1977), a loft at 141 Wooster Street filled with a layer of moist earth 22 inches high, and *The Broken Kilometer* (1977), consisting of 500 brass rods arranged in five parallel rows at 393 West Broadway—are permanent installations sponsored by the Dia Art Foundation.

An artist long admired for his simple yet extravagant ideas and precise geometric gestures, De Maria was characterized as reclusive because he lived and worked under the radar. It's far more likely that he was simply unwilling to explain his art. In a rare interview for the Archives of American Art in 1972, he told Paul Cummings: "I think to be a true minimalist you should almost nearly be invisible yourself."

Born in 1935 in Albany, California, De Maria seemed headed for a musical career; he joined a musicians' union at 16 and was a percussionist in bands during high school and in municipal orchestras while studying political science, history, and art history at the University of California, Berkeley. As a postgraduate art student, he played in the San Francisco Art Institute band along with his teacher David Park, who

was a pianist as well as a painter.

De Maria entered the scene as a jazz musician and landed in the art world in time to take part in the late '50s avant-garde. He collaborated with La Monte Young, whom he had met at the



▲ *The Lightning Field*, 1977, Walter De Maria's installation in western New Mexico.

university, on the earliest Happenings in California, and hung out in San Francisco with Robert Morris, Simone Forti, and Robert Whitman. After he moved to New York in 1960, he participated in Whitman's Happenings, worked at the New York Public Library, bred cats, and made Minimalist boxes and works on paper. He called a work on paper "as much of an idea as it was a drawing." In 1963, he and Whitman opened a gallery at 9 Great Jones Street. He also performed as a percussionist with jazz trumpeter Don Cherry and joined The Primitives, which morphed into the Velvet Underground.

De Maria's art spans the era from

Virginia Dwan, the early patron of Earthworks, to Larry Gagosian, both of whom represented him. He had his first solo show at the Paula Cooper Gallery (then known as Paula Johnson) in 1965. Two years later, he drove across the country with Earthwork artist Michael Heizer, the two of them bouncing ideas back and forth. De Maria had been making proposals for Earthworks since 1960, but none were realized until the 1968 *Mile Long Drawing*, consisting of two parallel chalk lines stretching across the Mojave Desert.

For Documenta 1977, De Maria buried *The Vertical Earth Kilometer*, a long brass rod, so that only its end was visible. He participated in the 1966 "Primary Structures" show at the Jewish Museum and in Harald Szeemann's 1969 "When Attitudes Become Form" at the Bern Kunsthalle. That same year his Minimalist film *Hard Core* was shown at the Edinburgh Festival. In the Prada Foundation's recreation of Szeemann's exhibition in Venice, De Maria's black telephone reappears with a sign saying: "If this phone rings

you may answer it. Walter De Maria is on the line and would like to talk to you."

De Maria believed that every good work should have at least ten meanings and that there was no such thing as pure form without content. His 1970 proposal for a competition in Hanover, Germany, involved 100 rescued elephants that were to walk through the streets of the city. *The 2000 Sculpture*, first shown in the Kunsthau Zurich in 1992, consisted of 2,000 white rods arranged in a complex geometric structure; if laid end to end, the rods would measure exactly one kilometer. De Maria's *idée fixe* remained consistent to the end: simple, precise, extravagant, and sublime. ■

Kim Levin is an independent art critic and curator.





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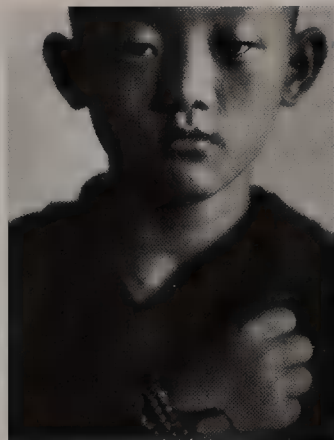
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### News Briefs

#### TRANSITIONS

■ **Kasper König** has been named chief curator of **Manifesta 10**. König was the founding director of the Portikus Frankfurt am Main in Germany and served as director of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne from 2000–12.

#### AWARDS

■ Turkish novelist **Orhan Pamuk** is the first winner of

**Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn**

**Kotz Award** for his book *The Innocence of Objects*. The award, which will be presented by the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, is named after **Mary Lynn Kotz**, a long-time contributing editor of this magazine and author of the acclaimed 1990 book *Rauschenberg: Art and Life*.

■ Palestinian artist **Khaled Hourani** and American artist **Laurie Jo Reynolds** are the recipients of the **Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change**. The \$15,000 award is presented annually by Creative Time and honors artists who raise awareness of social and political issues through their work.

■ American sculptor **Joel Shapiro** has won the **Outstanding Contribution to the Arts Award**, which is given annually by Americans for the Arts.



Mary Lynn Kotz.

#### OBITUARIES

■ **Ruth Asawa, artist, 87.**

Born in 1926 in Norwalk, California, Asawa was known for her large-scale wire sculptures. Some of Asawa's earliest encounters with art took place in a Japanese in-

ternment camp during World War II. There, she learned to paint and draw from artists who were interned as well.

Asawa's works are in the permanent collections of many institutions such as the

Guggenheim Museum in New York. She also created numerous public sculptures, including the 1994 *Japanese American Internment Memorial* in San Jose, California.

■ **Elizabeth Berger, community leader, 53.**

Born in New York City in 1960, Berger was a champion for the betterment of downtown Manhattan. She was a graduate of Yale College and held numerous leadership positions throughout her career.

Most recently, Berger was president of the Alliance for Downtown New York and

president of the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association. During her time with these organizations, she aided the construction of the Fulton Street Transit Center and the enactment of

post-9/11 commercial leasing incentives. She also facilitated relief efforts for the victims of Superstorm Sandy.

—**Stephanie Strasnick**



Elizabeth Berger.



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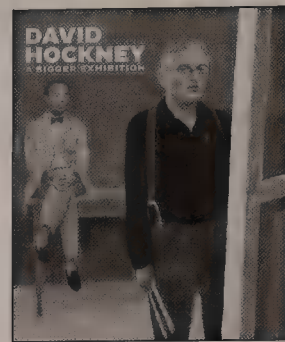
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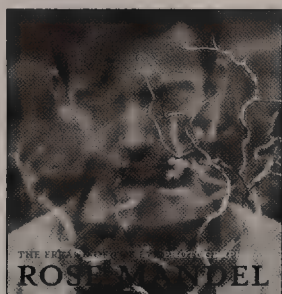
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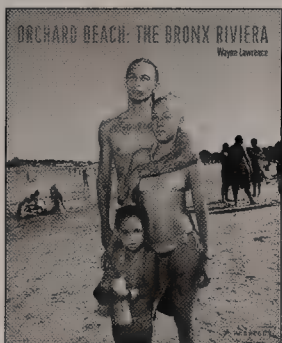
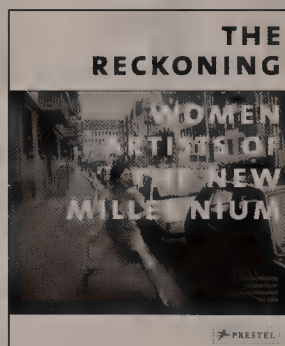
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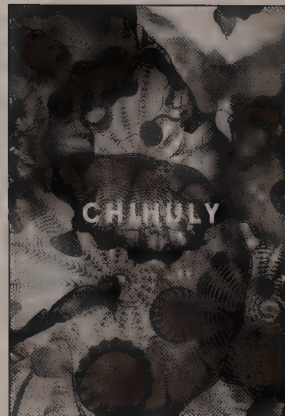
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# How Edward Hopper Storyboarded *Nighthawks*

Drawings at the Whitney reveal the step-by-step  
process the artist used to create his iconic  
painting of a New York diner at night

BY ROBIN CEMBALEST

Sometime in 1941 or '42, Edward Hopper, who liked to prowls New York City with a sketchbook, lingered in a diner, making studies of a man wearing a suit and a fedora.

He made a few quick frontal studies of figures sitting at the counter. He sketched one figure, seen from behind, several times. With rapid strokes, Hopper captured the man as he moved: the variations in the tilt of the head, the press of the body against the counter, the play of light on the jacket.

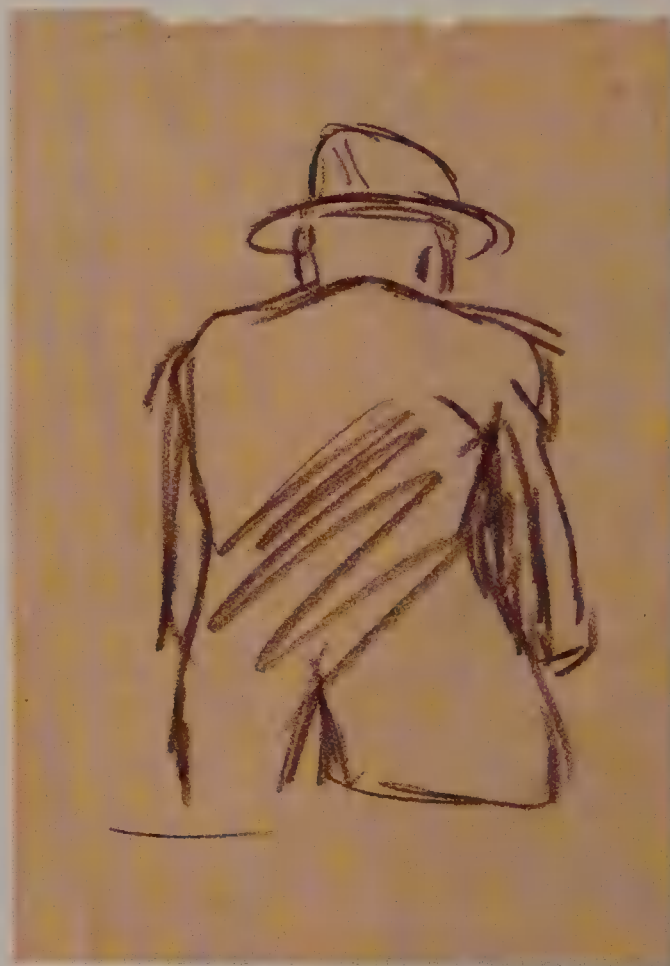
The man is an early version of the painted figure seen from behind in *Nighthawks*, Hopper's melancholy, much-parodied 1942 masterpiece that is surely the most famous diner scene in art history.

These drawings are among 19 studies for *Nighthawks*, brought together for the first time in a revelatory show now at the Whitney Museum. "Hopper Drawing" deploys 200 examples—part of a trove of 2,500 bequeathed by the artist's widow, Josephine—to showcase the role of drawing throughout Hopper's career, from his life drawing classes at the New York School of Art in the early 1900s, to his travels in Europe and visits to Paris from 1906 to 1910, to the studies he made at the Whitney Studio Club and beyond. (After closing at the Whitney on October 6, the show will travel to the Dallas Museum of Art and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.)

The focus of the show is the series of preparatory

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Robin Cembalest is executive editor of ARTnews.

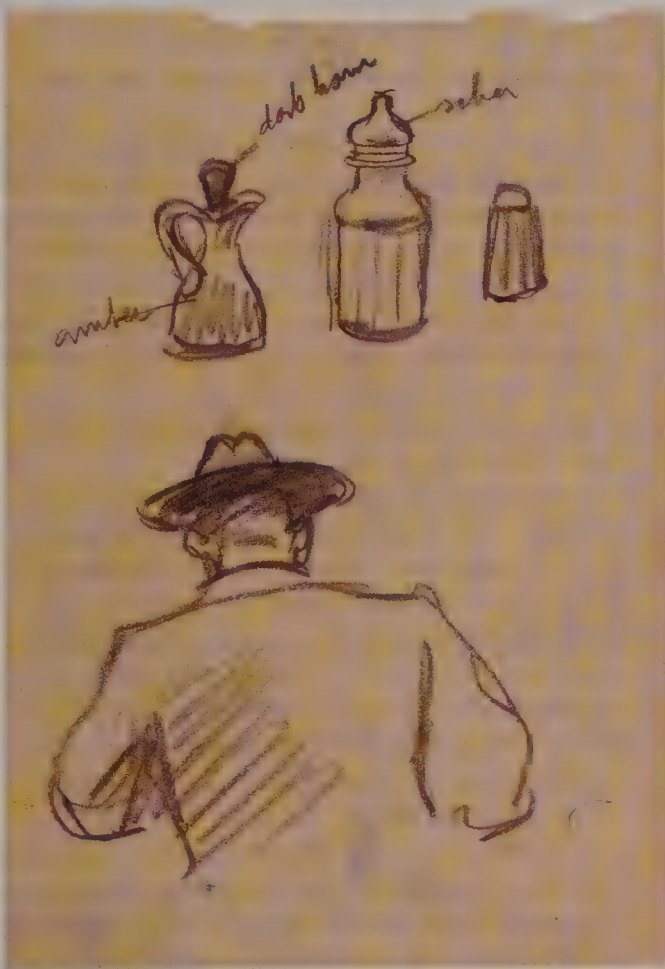


An early study for the lone man seen from behind. From one drawing to the next, Hopper refined every detail.





*Nighthawks*, 1942, is the most famous diner scene in art history. Scholars have determined that Hopper's diner was not based on a specific building but was a composite of wedge-shaped intersections around Greenwich Avenue.

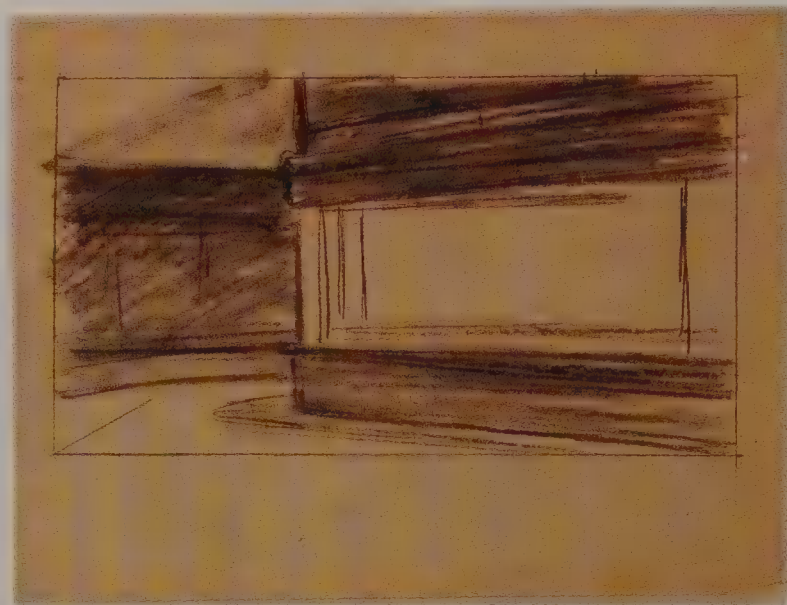
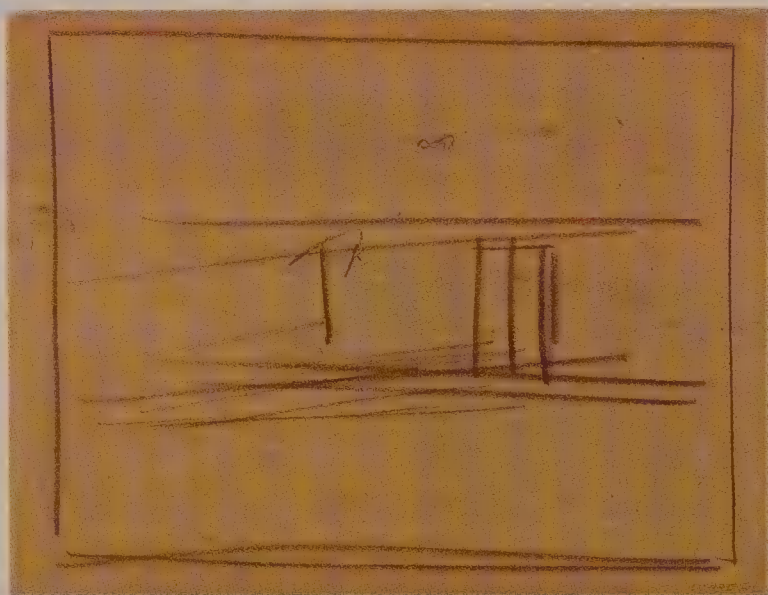


The tableware seen in this drawing, with notes on color, made its way into the final painting.



In a later drawing, the man is seated firmly on his stool and his arms are clearly resting on the counter.





**LEFT** The diner first emerges in a compositional study with just a few slightly diagonal lines intersected by short verticals.  
**RIGHT** In a later drawing, the structure's Modernist lines stand out against the 19th-century brick streetscape.

drawings Hopper made for his large oil paintings. "Hopper Drawing" includes seven sections in which well-known canvases—*Soir Bleu* (1914), *Manhattan Bridge Loop* (1928), *From Williamsburg Bridge* (1928), *Early Sunday Morning* (1930), *New York Movie* (1939), and *Office at Night* (1940), as well as *Nighthawks*—are shown with the studies that document their step-by-step evolution.

Hopper, who started signing and dating his drawings at the age of ten and went on to make thousands more until his death in 1967, would have found the very idea of the show befuddling. Not because it took almost a half century after his death for any museum to devote a major exhibition to his drawings, but because a museum is showing his drawings at all. Hopper didn't consider his drawings as art objects that should be exhibited or sold. To him, they were simply studio materials—documents of the process he used to conceive and to plot, in minute detail, the stories he told on canvas.

The *Nighthawks* drawings reveal how Hopper choreographed his voyeuristic scene of the nighttime convergence of four figures—a lone man, a couple, and a waiter—in an eerie Deco diner, refining every nuance of the figures, the countertop, the architecture, and the effects of the fluorescent lighting.

The diner first emerges in a compositional study with just a few slightly diagonal lines intersected by short verticals—just the essence of the painting's spatial conception. But also present is the serpentine leg of one of the coffee urns in the upper center. "This marvelous demonstration of both extreme specificity and near abstract compositional summation on the same surface beguilingly reflects how empirical observation and imagination coexisted in Hopper's head," curator Carter E. Foster writes in the catalogue.

In other studies, the viewpoint moves to just outside

the scene. The format becomes more horizontal. The figures appear in their places: the man in the fedora with his back to us, the couple across the counter, the stooped waiter.

In one drawing, we see the emergence of the glowing wedge—highlighting the diner's Modernist lines against the 19th-century brick streetscape—that *New York Times* critic Roberta Smith describes in her recent review of "Hopper Drawing" as "really the picture's main character."

Here, says Foster, the artist tackled, "perhaps for the first time, the way in which light and dark would play out to underscore the dichotomy of inside and out. Perhaps this was even when he decided to make the painting a night scene, for the swath of chalk that shades the upper left corner—applied broadly with the side of the stick—adds that extra bit of darkness, effectively turning on the interior light in the diner (actually nothing but the reserve of the paper) seen through the large window."

In other studies, made on higher-quality paper, Hopper refined the figures—the tilt of their heads, the angle of their bodies, the fall of light on their skin and clothing. His wife, Jo, posed for the female figure. Hopper himself posed for the males—presumably using double mirrors so he could see himself.

Continuing his studies of the lone male figure, Hopper worked in "firm, linear strokes with the tip of the chalk and nuanced shading achieved with stumping and blending," Foster writes. The artist develops the three-quarter view seen in the painting, with the right side of the face just visible. The light sketch on the bottom of one page (upside down to the main image) shows a change in the way his head tilts—"a slight difference," notes Foster, "but one Hopper considered carefully."

Another sheet shows studies of Jo's arms. A study of her right hand holding a cigarette evolved into the





**ABOVE** In the final drawing, the light spills through plate-glass windows onto the sidewalk, contrasting with the dark street behind. **BELOW** Hopper's wife, Jo, posed for the female figure. It's impossible to tell what she's holding in her hand.

man's hand in the painting, the hand closest to touching the woman—"a spot with a tense undercurrent of suggestion," as Foster puts it.

After years of search and scholarship, experts have determined that *Nighthawks* was not inspired by one specific diner. Rather, it was a composite of wedge-shaped intersections around Greenwich Avenue. Its curving prow seems partly inspired by the Flatiron Building.

In the finished oil painting, Hopper has opened up the perspective, adding an area of pale-yellow ceiling. We can see more of the tops of the stools. More of the countertop is visible, too, its continuous surface connecting the characters in a way they weren't connected before.

The arms and hands of the couple also emerge in the final painting. But the couple no longer face one another as they did in the final drawing. The man is looking at the waiter, who is talking to him, and the woman's eyes are on something she holds in her hand. It's impossible to tell what it is; it might be a sandwich, it might be cash, or it might be a pack of Lucky Strikes.

Now, though, these figures are not as close as they were in the final study. "If Hopper's paintings are an art of silence," Foster writes, "much is told through nuance of gesture and body." ■





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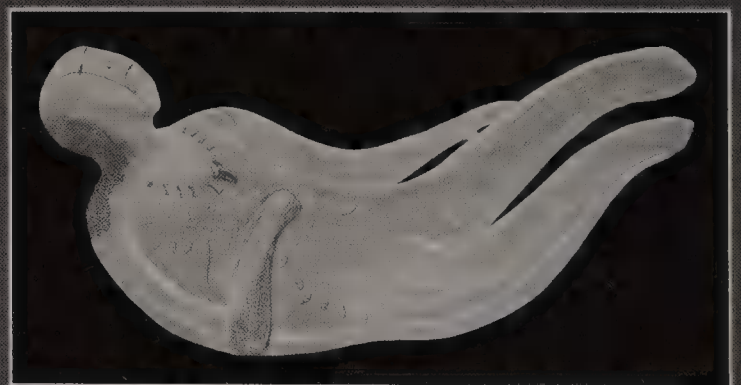
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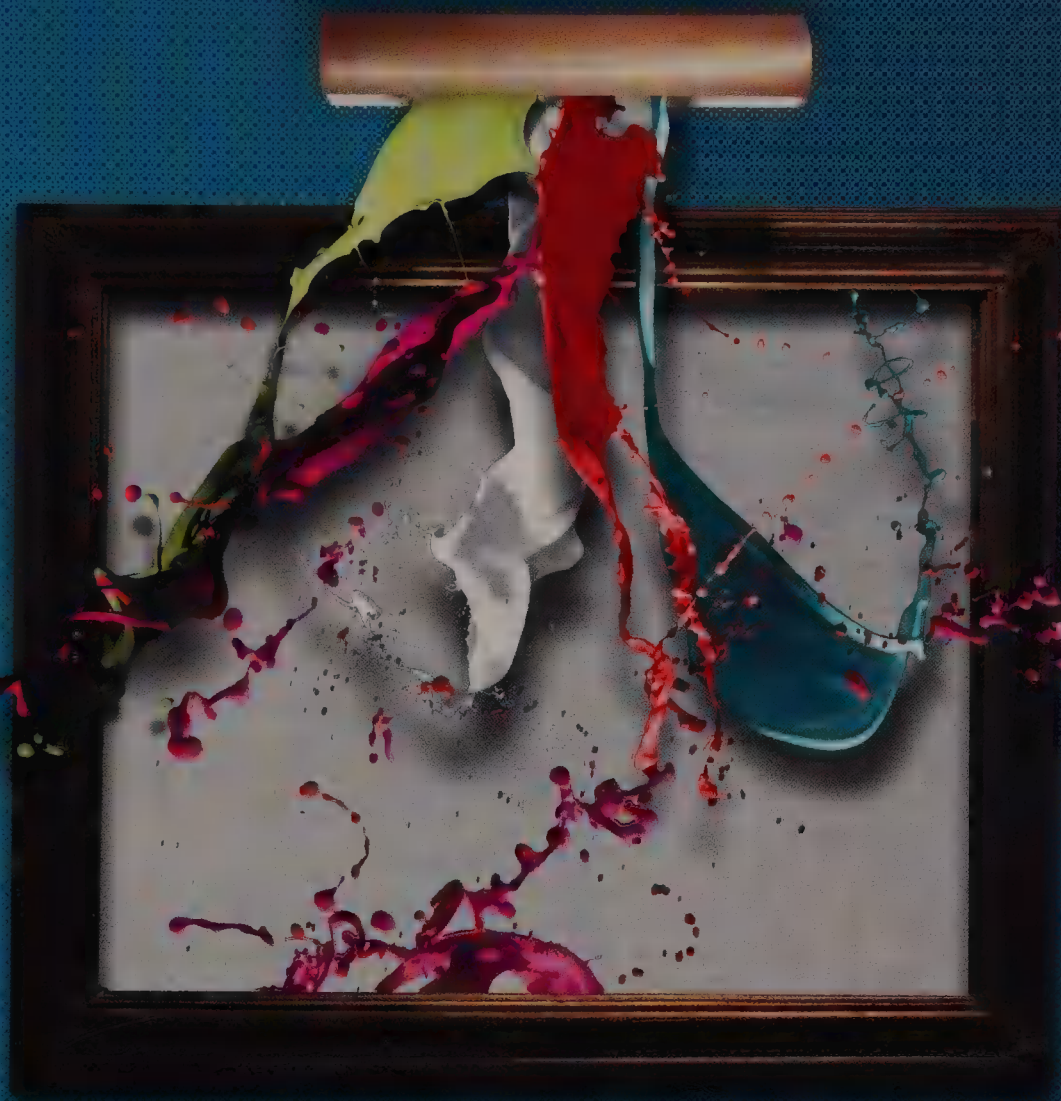
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# Phoning It In

The popularity of telephone bidding at auction surges, despite the danger of dropped calls and bad connections

BY DANIEL GRANT

Johnny Van Haeften, a prominent London art dealer, had planned to attend the 2011 Old Masters sale at the Dorotheum auction house in Vienna—or, at least, the preview—because he was interested in Frans Francken the Younger's 17th-century painting *Allegory of Man's Choice*. A specialist in Golden Age Dutch painting, Van Haeften doesn't like to buy without seeing. Unfortunately for him, the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland halted all Austrian air traffic.

"A few dealers in Vienna had looked at it for me and said it was good," he recalls, "so I knew I was on solid ground." And the Austrian phones still worked, so he decided to bid by phone—ultimately paying \$9.4 million for the work, the highest price ever achieved by an Old Master painting at auction in Austria, and a new record for the artist.

Not everyone is as lucky with purchases made remotely. "We once had someone bidding hundreds of thousands of euros for a painting, and then he crossed a tunnel and lost the bid," says Henrik Hanstein, managing director of the Cologne auction house Lempertz. "He tried to call back, but you can't reach the salesroom directly."

Though more and more art-auction buyers are doing their bidding over the telephone or online these days—sometimes because they physically can't get to the auction house, but more often because they don't want to—it is a notoriously risky business. Many buyers are contacted while driving, but if they move too far from a cell-phone tower, the call is dropped. Other bidders are sometimes found on boats, at restaurants, in airplanes, or at sporting events when the auction house reaches them, and interferences and interruptions are unavoidable. "I had someone phone bidding on a lot," says Nicholas Lowry, president of Swann Auction Galleries in New York, "who told me, 'I have to go now. My house is on fire.'"

What with bad connections, dropped calls, and dying phones, the job of putting together and running an auction has become more difficult. That said, the formerly packed salesrooms for major auctions are not as crowded—which Amy Todd Middleton, Sotheby's worldwide head of marketing, attributes to the development of "viable alternatives to being there." Indeed, in recent years, the highest dollar-amount bidding usually takes place on the telephone. At Christie's May 23 auction of American paintings in New York, for example, 41.5 percent of the overall \$50,848,750 earned in the sale (or \$21,102,231) came from phone bidders. And almost half of the \$4,395,751 (including buyer's premium) earned at the Dallas-based Heritage Auctions' November 15, 2012 sale of American and European art, some \$2,144,125, was generated by telephone bidders, while salesroom collectors only accounted for \$399,398 (or 11 percent).

For Christie's fall 2011 auction of objects from the estate of actress Elizabeth Taylor, head of private and iconic collections Andrew McVinish claims that 70 telephones were in the room—



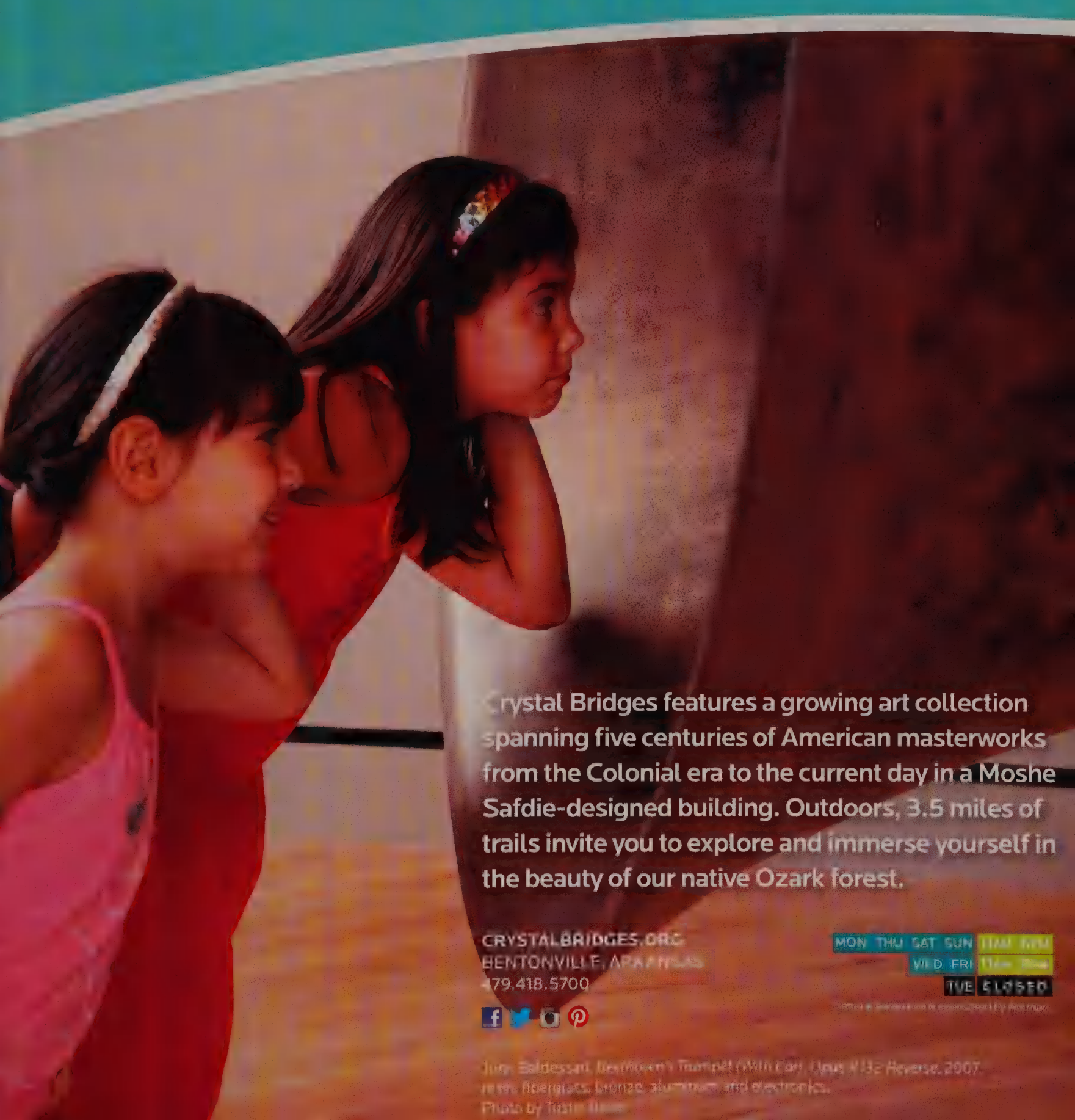
Heritage Auctions president Greg Rohan takes a call at an auction aboard the Queen Mary in 2011.





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July: Baldessari, BeeMösen's Trumpet (With Cori, Uptus #132 Reverse, 2007.  
revers, fiberglass, bronze, aluminum and electronics.  
Photo by Justin Hesse



and, at certain points, they were all in use. (For most other major sales, he notes, the average number of phones is between 20 and 30.) Occasionally, additional staff members need to use their company cell phones to handle the overload.

The number of phone banks in auction salesrooms has also grown significantly over the past decade. Most banks are located on one side of the auction salesroom, although Heritage Auctions sites its phones at the front, close to the auctioneer, "so that phone bidders can hear in the background the excitement in the auctioneer's voice," says Paul Minshull, Heritage's chief operating officer. Auction staff will phone the buyers who have expressed an interest in a lot, usually five or six lots in advance.

"Whenever possible, we try to get a regular landline," said Hanstein, but usually the auction house is given a number for a cell phone. The bidder is then asked for a back-up cell phone or two, and is informed that "mobile phones are risky."

If a call is dropped, the auction staff person tries to call back on that number or on a back-up phone number, signaling to the auctioneer that he or she is attempting to reconnect. Usually, a pause in the action is permitted, lasting between 15 seconds and a few minutes, depending upon the estimated value of the lot and the prominence of the bidder—and sometimes, the bidder is lost for good. Alan Fausel, vice president of fine arts at Bonhams, once mistakenly hit a button on the telephone he was using while speaking to a bidder, disconnecting the would-be buyer. "I was in full panic mode, looking around, trying to figure out how to get back to the bidder," he recalls. Fortunately, a colleague saw what had happened and pushed the original button, reconnecting Fausel to the bidder, who had only been on hold for a few seconds.

There are various ways for an auctioneer to buy time while a staff member tries to redial a bidder. According to Middleton, "auctioneers can become conversational, quite loquacious, if they have to be," making jokes or offering commentaries on artworks between lots. Middleton also notes that many of the high-end collectors and dealers in Sotheby's skybox, which overlooks the sales floor during major auctions, occasionally choose to bid by telephone or online although they're in the room. According to Hanstein, some may want their identities kept secret, because "they don't want their government to know what they own and how much money they have." One collector who attends auctions prefers to do his bidding online



**A busy phone bank at Sotheby's London sale of Impressionist and Modern Art this past June.**

"so other people in the room won't know who they are bidding against."

Despite the convenience for phone and online bidders, what has become more complicated for auction houses is how to whip up enthusiasm among prospective bidders who aren't on the auction floor to experience the staged drama in person. The goal, therefore, is to recreate the excitement of being at the actual auction for the person at the other end of the line—and matching the right staff person to the particular telephone bidder is an art in itself. Leslie Hindman, a Chicago-based auction-house owner, says that "if the bidder is a bit hyper, we find someone who is calm and reassuring. With someone who is more low-key, we'll have someone on the phone that can get them more revved up." There are some employees who may be experts in their field, she goes on, "but we wouldn't allow them on the phone, because they don't have the right personality." All auction-house staff members who operate the phones during sales receive special training on when to contact the bidder, how to avoid giving away the name of the person whom they are calling, how to get bidders to make decisions quickly, and what to say about the sale in general and the lot in particular.

The bidding itself offers no time or opportunity for additional chatting, as the staff person must repeat to the prospective bidder what the auctioneer has announced—almost simultaneously. Complete sentences take too long, and might lose a buyer the chance to bid. Instead, Hanstein says, they keep it short. "Not, 'Do you want to make another bid?'" he says, "but 'Bidding?' 'One more?' 'Sure?'" ■

*Daniel Grant is the author of The Business of Being an Artist (Skyhorse Press).*





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# Keeping New Media New

Conservators are rushing to keep pace with technology as they find ways to extend the working lives of art made with code, VHS tapes, and other rapidly changing platforms

BY RACHEL WOLFF

In our increasingly tech-addled world, the 2010s are proving to be something of a turning point. By and large, the last 50 years of technology have been forced into retirement, superseded by better, cheaper, and faster tools. Analog television went dark in 2009 in favor of digital communications, and cathode-ray tubes (or CRTs) live mostly as relics on eBay. VHS tapes gave way to laser discs; laser discs to DVDs; DVDs to Blu-rays, which almost immediately yielded to pure data. And our computer and Internet systems have evolved well beyond their slow and buggy progenitors (not to mention Ray Bradbury and Philip K. Dick's wildest dreams). The technicians trained in dealing with such recently outdated modes of technology are becoming increasingly rare, too.

This can bestow on new media work—much of which was designed to be ephemeral in the first place—a certain aura of mortality. Like an overtaxed laptop, a decade-old MySpace account, or a first-generation LCD flat screen, the natural fate of most new media art would be to flatline and die. But what turns out to be exciting is the creative way in which artists, curators, and conservators have been navigating new media art's afterlife—be it via a commemorative plaque, a spiffy new operating system, or a 2.0-type clone.

"Art is just one professional field that is trying to grapple with the preservation of digital and new media



ABOVE Nam June Paik, *Random Access (Schallplatten-schaschlik)*, 1963/1979, record player with lengthened axis, records, and moveable pick-up arm. OPPOSITE Paik's *Untitled (robot)*, 2005, undergoing conservation.

Rachel Wolff is an art writer, editor, and film producer based in Brooklyn, NY.





NP1 PS.97



material," says Richard Rinehart, director of the Samek Art Gallery at Bucknell University. With fellow digi-trailblazer Jon Ippolito, Rinehart has penned what will be the first book dedicated to the subject of conserving new media art, *Re-collection: New Media, Art, and Social Memory*. It is due to be released by MIT Press in the spring.

"Archives, libraries, government agencies, universities — they're all grappling with the same problem," Rinehart adds. "We need to reach out to these other fields to inform us, to tell us how to do this stuff. The flip side is that the art world has a very unique way of thinking about media. And when it comes to new media, I think that the art world has an intellectual toolkit at its disposal that can make an interesting contribution to the digital preservation conversation on a broader scope."

It starts with understanding the ways in which artists and curators think about the artworks themselves. "These are more or less living artworks — they have a pulse," says Michael Mansfield, associate curator of film and media arts at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Mansfield, who oversees the museum's new media conservation efforts, helped organize the recent exhibition "Nam June Paik: Global Visionary." "It's interesting to consider the model built by zoos for living organisms," says Mansfield. "That they have a life cycle and you document that life cycle as best you can. And then, when they're gone, you use that research to inform the next generation of the species."

The Paik exhibition is a fascinating case study in this regard. The first comprehensive retrospective of the pioneering video and new media artist's work in our decidedly post-CRT age, the show included aging and refurbished examples of Paik's output. For instance, the once user-dependent *Random Access* (1963/2000), an abstract collage featuring strips of audiotape that squeal in response to friction, was only activated a few times a month on docent-led gallery tours in order to preserve the piece for the lengthy run of the show; installations were updated with CRTs from Paik's substantial archive (which the Smithsonian acquired in 2009); and one of the artist's untitled robots from 1992 was outfitted with small, new flat screens behind the original CRT shells that account for its eyes and stomach.

Post-op, the newly anointed "Paikbot," joined Twitter.

After thorough research and consultation with his estate, the Smithsonian concluded that the late Paik would have signed off on the adjustments and even the Twitter feed. "He had an interest in his work remaining alive," says the museum's senior curator of film and media arts, John Hanhardt. "He understood better than anyone that this is all going to change."

On a technical level, the Paik exhibition allowed the museum to put some of the new media preservation techniques into practice. "Electricity heats up and cools down," Mansfield says. It vibrates, it breathes, it powers on and off. "Every day it's a new exhibit. And you have to take precautions to care for it daily." A digital show-control system modified to fit the Smithsonian's exacting needs optimizes "on" times and alerts staff to failing systems and bulbs. Installed in 2009, it is unique to the museum, adapted from a program used to run and maintain amusement parks.

Another tactic that has emerged in recent years and stands more or less in direct opposition to common practice for works of traditional media (paintings, sculptures, photographs, and works on paper), prescribes that art be hidden away in carefully controlled environments between shows to allow it to rest. With new media, "what we've found is that because of the aging and obsolescence cycles of both

the technological equipment and also the software that's operating behind it, the preservation imperative is actually predicated on frequent display," says Jill Sterrett, director of conservation and collections at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. "You have to keep checking that thing over and over and over," she says. "It's a very active process as opposed to a passive one, and this is sort of challenging us to change our rhythms in museums."

Living artists themselves are also crucial collaborators in this effort. And one of the most effective tools among conservators today may be the practice of interviewing the artists relentlessly. "We want to know how much authority they're transferring to the museum to interpret the work in the future, what we should do if the technology that they originally showed it on is no longer available," says Glenn Wharton, a special projects conservator at MoMA and professor at the Conservation



**In Adam Chapman's *Diagram of Isolated Moments Forming a Memory (Andy G)*, 2008–9, the figure is constructed by computer-generated lines and forms.**





Once viewed on a rear-projection television set, Jim Campbell's *Digital Watch*, 1991, is presented using a digital projection and flat screen.

Center of the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. In essence: which part is the art? It's a technique that is, of course, shared among conservators of all types of contemporary art—from installations of sewn and aging fruit peels (in the manner of Zoe Leonard) to dark-chocolate figurative busts (as in the work of the late Dieter Roth) to spontaneously amorous museum patrons (à la Tino Sehgal). Yet this information needs to be shared and preserved, too, and what's missing, says Christiane Paul, the Whitney Museum's adjunct curator of new media arts, is a MetaServer—a single place where all of the information can be posted, updated, and accessed. "I think that will be a major effort in the future," she says.

Video artists tend to perceive their work as somewhat fluid. For the pioneering video and new media artist Peter Campus, the physicality of the medium is irrelevant. "I want my work to keep changing and growing—that's very important to me," Campus says. "Because this is a medium that keeps changing, and I don't want to pretend that it doesn't."

Campus has been proactive in this regard. Using new technology, he has been able to streamline some of the

effects he originally created in his video works from the 1970s, many of which rely on the use of closed-circuit cameras, projectors, and, originally, videotape decks. *Anamnesis*, for instance, a 1974 piece Campus exhibited late last year in a solo exhibition at the Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery in New York, projects two images of the viewer onto the wall as he or she observes the piece—one in real time, one captured several seconds earlier. Campus updated the work with a "black box" apparatus that creates the time-delay effect by holding the viewer's image on a hard drive and then releasing it at the desired intervals. Originally, a tape ran between two clunky players to achieve the delay.

Institutions, too, are increasingly keen to preempt such transitions. This summer, the New Museum offered artists free media-migration services to preserve and archive work made using aging or defunct media formats (think floppy disks, zip disks, CDs, MiniDV's, and VHS) by uploading them onto the publicly accessible site [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org). Titled "XFR STN" (i.e., "Transfer Station") and initiated by artist Alan W. Moore, the project functioned as something of an exhibition as well: after the migration process, the obsolete media went on display.

Similarly, video artist Tony Oursler has taken to

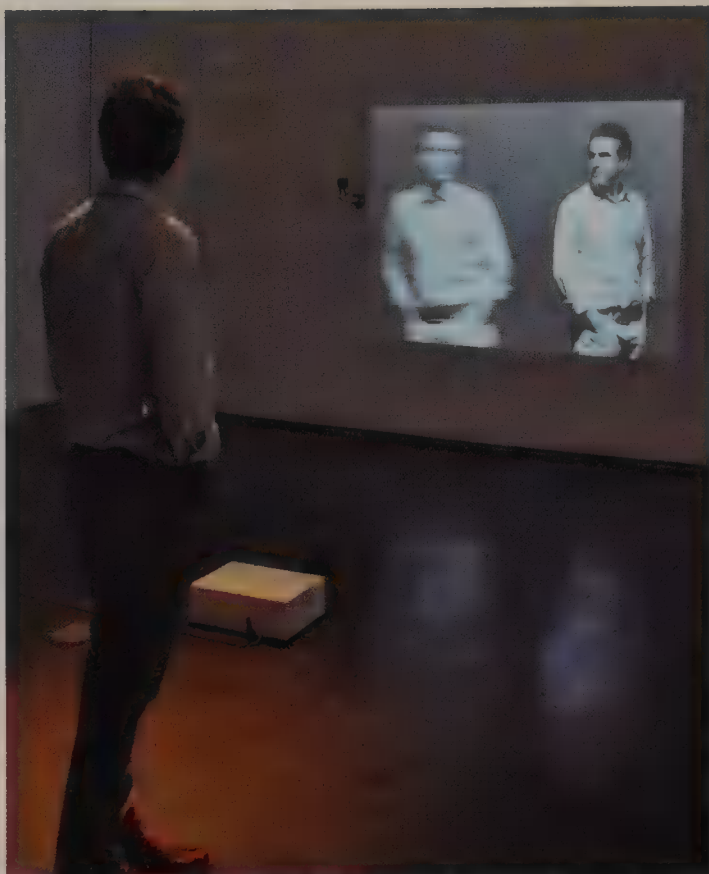


remastering his older work in the studio for posterity thanks to newly available consumer systems and software—something that just ten years ago would have required an outside editing house and considerable funds to accomplish. Jennifer Crowe and Scott Paterson have given the Whitney Museum explicit instructions to transfer their audio-tour-as-art piece *Follow Through* (2005) to any and all future media formats, ranging from iPods to iPads to *Star Wars*-style holograms. And Jim Campbell oversaw the migration of his *Digital Watch*, a 1991 piece owned by SF-MOMA, from a rear-projection television set to a digital projection on a black-framed flat screen.

Given the transferability of some of this work, back-up copies and data can and do exist in ways one would never imagine with regard to other types of art. “We came up with language around the sale that would allow the collector to suspend copyright temporarily in order to transfer the data from one delivery system to another,” says Catharine Clark, a San Francisco gallerist who specializes in new media work. Adam Chapman, an artist represented by Clark, provides collectors with the actual data and code needed to recreate his generative digital drawings (works that come to life over time as computer-generated lines and shapes collide on an LED screen installed behind a piece of archival paper to form sketches of sinewy Schiele-like nudes—a new series of which will be on view at Clark’s gallery in November). Campbell has provided second full versions of his pieces to museums at their request (the Metropolitan Museum of Art, among them)—the idea being that, “if it breaks, you have one there to compare it to.” And, Glenn Wharton says, MoMA is in the process of digitizing its entire film and video archive.

I DID NOT FEEL SEPARATED I FELT VERY CLOSE  
EVEN THOUGH WE WERE THOUSANDS OF MILES  
APART AND I WAS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE HERE I  
FELT CLOSE

This touching fragment—that presciently gets at why many of us still use the Internet today—begins Douglas Davis’s 1994 piece of web art, *The World’s First Collaborative Sentence*. Commissioned by the Lehman College Art Gallery and acquired by the Whitney in 1995, it is widely considered to be the first work of Internet-based



**Peter Campus updated his 1974 video installation *Anamnesis* so that the visual effects are now achieved using a sleek, contemporary apparatus.**

art to enter the permanent collection of a museum.

The concept was simple enough: Kick off a sentence with a provocative prompt (courtesy of fellow new media artist Nathalie Novarina, who typed and entered the above from nearly 4,000 miles away in Geneva, Switzerland); post it on the web; then allow anyone with Internet access to add to it at will through an online form. Entries ranged from perfunctory to poetic to absurd: “WELL ISN’T IT JUST FUN TO WRITE TOGETHER LIKE THIS. . . . This is far too spontaneous for Canadians We prefer our Babel towers a little politer. . . . TECHNOLOGY WILL NOT ELIMINATE THE DECAY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT. . . . boo boo boo yahoo yahoo yahoo . . . osram traktor, osram lada, da da da dada dadada da.”

Yet the coding, the hosting, and the sheer functionality of the project were far more complex than its interface—a sim-

ple white webpage splashed with black text and the occasional hyperlink—may suggest. By 2005, the piece was dysfunctional and warped, plagued with a rusty foundation that was no longer compatible with our current digital tools. Non-English characters were jumbled, the layout was off, links were broken, and the add form didn’t work.

The piece languished in its creaky and defective state for years but, in 2012, with requests coming for loans and a sense of responsibility to the artist, the piece, and the Whitney’s groundbreaking acquisition, Christianne Paul decided to take action. The now 80-year-old Davis was unavailable to advise on the project, so Paul herself oversaw the conservation, keeping the artist’s original intention in mind at every juncture.

It was an unexpectedly daunting task, both technically and conceptually. Paul settled on a two-piece solution (both parts are newly available for perusal at [artport.whitney.org](http://artport.whitney.org)). Version one recreates the sentence right up to the point where it stopped working—a digital restorer preserved unusual characters and formatting and repaired broken links using the Wayback Machine, a sprawling Internet archive that preserves defunct web pages from 1996 on. Version two is an emulation—an updated, reprogrammed, live version of the sentence to which viewers can add just as they did with Davis’s original work. It’s in this form that the interactive component of the piece will live on.

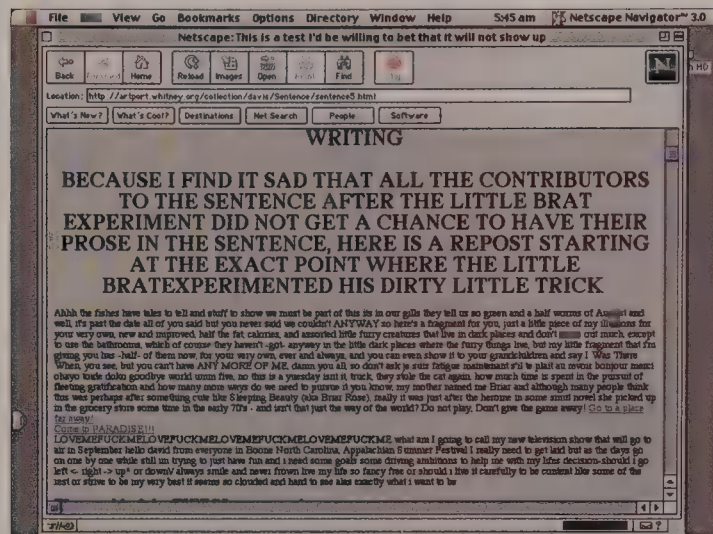


Methods tend to change when the message is the medium, and no artist illustrates that better than Brooklyn's Cory Arcangel. Best known for hacking old-school Nintendo systems in the name of art, Arcangel has made it known to the institutions that collect his work that when his clunky delivery systems of VHS tapes and 1990s-era video-game consuls are obsolete, his pieces will only live on as relics—documents of a bygone time. His *Video Painting* (2008), for instance, a VHS tape that projects colorful abstract imagery when played (the sole copy of which was acquired by the Smithsonian American Art Museum) has the unfortunate side effect of deteriorating into an unusable piece



of plastic by the end of an exhibition run. The museum owns an archival copy and a second-generation copy from which it makes exhibition copies for shows.

"Arcangel is, in some sense, fetishizing the technology of the videotape and commenting on that material," Michael Mansfield says. "And he really created it thinking about its institutional life. Artists are working to challenge institutions like ours." Mansfield likes to think the Smithsonian is rising to the occasion—preserving the work for as long as blank VHS tapes are still available on eBay, then fulfilling Arcangel's wish of transitioning the piece into an archive to be studied and remembered fondly; to live and let die.



ABOVE A VHS tape projects multicolor images in Cory Arcangel's 2008 *Video Painting* (left). In 2012, the Whitney Museum digitally restored Douglas Davis's net art piece *The World's First Collaborative Sentence*, 1994 (right).  
BELOW Inside the Nam June Paik Archive at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.





# China's Growing Auction Giant

The Poly Group, a \$40 billion state-owned enterprise, oversees activities ranging from arms dealing to an auction house that is the first in China to offer private sales and is rapidly promoting itself as a global brand

BY BARBARA POLLACK



**TOP** Beijing Hong Kong Poly Auction director Zhao Xu. **BOTTOM** Jonathan Stone, chairman and international head of Asian art for Christie's, left; Kevin Ching, CEO of Sotheby's Asia, right.

## It's the last day of his spring sale in June

2013, and Zhao Xu, chairman of the Beijing Poly International Auction Company, is distracted. The 44-year-old head of the world's third-largest auction house (after Christie's and Sotheby's) never moves his eyes from his computer as the figures roll in, bringing the total for the week of sales to more than \$461 million for Chinese classical paintings and calligraphy, Chinese modern and contemporary paintings, ceramics and works of art, rare wines, and other antiquities. With total revenues for 2013 now approaching \$620 million, Zhao has once again beat out his local competitor, China Guardian Auctions Company, which achieved \$537.9 million and surpassed Christie's Hong Kong's \$418 million for the same period.

According to the latest report of the European Fine Art Foundation, China is now the world's second-largest art market, accounting for more than 25 percent of international auction revenues, and Poly (as it is commonly called) is a big factor in the country's achieving this position. Founded in 2005, Poly expanded rapidly from its remarkable first sale of over \$91.5 million to record revenues of close to \$2 billion in 2011, without even offering masterpieces of Western art. Since then, prices have cooled in China, and Poly, like every other house in this field, saw a dip in its totals to nearly \$1.1 billion. But many say that Poly, as opposed to its competitors, has the resources and ingenuity to weather any turn in the market.

"At the very beginning, I just wanted to have a good result at our first sale," says Zhao, who was a romantic-realist painter and an art dealer before he was recruited to assist Poly in setting up the auction business. "I couldn't imagine it as something this big back then in 2005." Yet the company was not a small venture, even





**Liu Ye's *Big Flagship*, 1997, sold at Beijing Poly's June 1, 2013, sale for RMB 16,675,000 (\$2,724,178).**

from the beginning. Rather, it is part of the grand scheme of the China Poly Group Corporation, a \$40 billion state-owned enterprise, best known for arms dealing, but it also includes subsidiaries dealing with real estate, natural-resource mining, and investments. The company was originally founded in 1992, under the supervision of the People's Liberation Army, and then in 1999 control was transferred to another government agency. In 2000, as a government-owned business, Poly moved into the sphere of "soft power," using art and culture to wield influence globally. To that end, it opened a cultural branch, whose initial purpose was to

reclaim cultural relics from Western sources and repatriate them to China. Poly Culture Group Company currently manages a Beijing museum, theaters, cinemas, and film and television production enterprises, in addition to the successful auction house. Now, the company, including the museum, is housed in a 1 million-square-foot, 24-story glass tower, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, a modern Beijing landmark that opened in 2006.

With resources like these, Beijing Poly International

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*Barbara Pollack is a contributing editor of ARTnews.*



Auctions can afford to do things that other auction houses in China can't. For example, it is known to offer cash advances to valued consignors, as when it gave Baron Guy Ullens \$10 million to put up for sale 18 works from of his renowned collection of contemporary Chinese art in 2009. (The auction raised over \$22 million.) More recently, the firm made a deal with Minsheng Banking Corporation, the largest bank in China, to offer financial services such as loans to interested buyers. Both of these practices, which have their parallels in Western auction houses, are problematic in China, where loans are notoriously precarious and buyers often disappear from view. A recent report issued by the Chinese Auction Industry Association found that 40 to 50 percent of reported sales in China fail to be completed. The association, which will soon issue new regulations, attributes the 2012 decline in sales to lack of confidence in the auction houses, but others have ascribed the contraction to political factors, such as the change in government leadership last year and the imposition of penalties, even jail time, on those failing to pay custom duties. The CAIA would not comment specifically on Poly's results, but Poly has recently begun to require deposits of up to \$1.5 million for buyers, thereby bolstering the likelihood of payment.

"There are many misunderstandings over particular things, so maybe we have a different view than in the West, where trading is much more direct," says Li Da, general manager of Poly. "In the East, we deal with more flexibility and understanding. We are trying to establish a—let us say—gentler relationship between buyer and seller," she adds, referring to Poly's practice of offering flexible payment plans to close a sale or providing advances to get a consignment—whatever the circumstances dictate.

The firm is known to pursue deals aggressively and to make arrangements to obtain consignments on a case-by-case basis without concern for consistency. In certain instances, Poly has been known to require consignors to bring in bidders to guarantee a sale. While Li uses the term "flexibility" to describe Poly's approach, others perceive it as a form of aggressive marketing that tests the limits of China's rudimentary auction regulations. It is this ethos that has contributed to Poly's reputation for being unscrupulous, lacking in transparency, and for changing the rules to suit every transaction.

As Ma Xuedong, executive director of the Art Market Research Center, which publishes *Beijing Art Prospective*, a quarterly periodical that reports on the country's

auction market, puts it, Poly "may have the biggest numbers but they may not be the best auction house in people's minds." He cites the practice of private sales. Poly is the first auction house in China to launch such a department, and although it is not technically illegal, it does stir jealousy and trigger criticism among its competitors. "In China, the legality of private sales is kind of a blur—not really developed, and you are not supposed to do it, but Poly is doing it," says Ma. In other words, the auction regulations have not yet specifically addressed private sales, but the practice is generally frowned upon by other auction houses.

### When asked if Poly could

get in trouble when the Chinese Auction Industry Association issues its new regulations, Ma shakes his head. "No, they definitely need to follow the rules. They have the highest sales in China and are catching up with Christie's and Sotheby's so they won't do anything to jeopardize their brand." Again, the CAIA would not comment.

"There is a general issue of lack of transparency, and there is an issue about payment," says Philip Hoffman, chief executive of the Fine Art Fund Group Limited, which has invested heavily in Chinese artworks, but which has come up against such problems when consigning in any of the Chinese mainland firms. "One of the biggest issues we are having with selling to Chinese or working with Chinese partners is getting guarantees of certainty of

payment. We have not found consistency with abiding with U.S. and UK systems of law, in terms of bidding and having to pay. People are bidding and walking away from payment." According to Hoffman, a contributing factor is that clients in China are new to the business and not well vetted; they may even be represented by a shell company disguising its genuine, often shady, business.

But Li insists that Poly's creativity and initiatives have made it more probable that a consignor will get paid eventually, if not on time. "We provide the financial service to the client who needs financial support. If they buy an artwork and they just don't want to pay for it, we will find a way—maybe even sue them in the court," she says. "But sometimes they buy something, and they just don't have the way to quickly deliver the money. Then we look at this buyer's credit, and if their background shows good credit, we can provide the service to finance the deal, such as arranging a loan from Minsheng Bank to deliver the money to the seller."



**Yang Feiyun's 1995 painting *Big Plant* sold at Beijing Poly's June 1, 2013, sale for RMB 7,475,000 (\$1,220,428).**





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** *Landscape Fan* by Ming Dynasty painter Tang Yin sold at Beijing Poly's June 3, 2013, sale for RMB 11,500,000 (\$1,877,582); *The Beautiful Countryside* by Wang Yidong, 2009, sold for RMB 9,200,000 (\$1,502,065) at Poly's June 1, 2013, sale; and Li Keran's 1964 *Mountains in Red* went for RMB 293,250,000 (\$47,878,341) at Poly's June 3, 2012, sale.



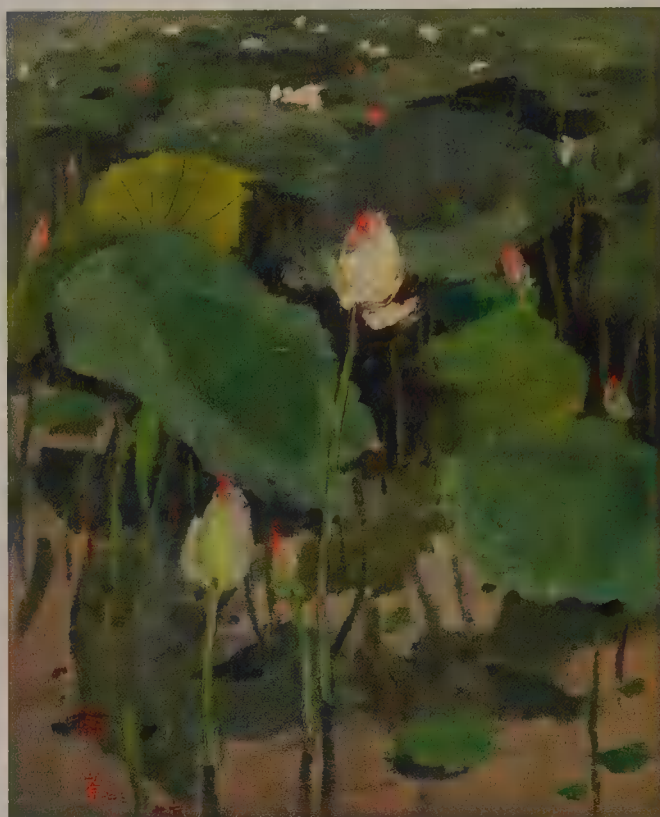
"I've placed consignments with Poly many times and I've never had a problem," says Meg Maggio, owner and director of Pekin Fine Arts, a Beijing gallery. Characterizing Poly as an "innovator," she points out that the firm recently initiated the first sales in contemporary design and has been a pioneer in organizing pre-auction exhibitions, traveling works around the world and around China. "Contemporary auction sales are slowing down here," she says. "But Poly has more categories of auction sale items than any other auction house in the region. This will protect them from a downturn in any one sector."

Poly is moving forward, rapidly promoting itself as a global brand. It now has offices in Taiwan, Australia, and Japan, and in 2011, it opened offices in New York and San Francisco. Its U.S. representatives are looking for consignments—primarily classical Chinese works of art that have found their way into collections here but may find buyers in Beijing eager to bring such properties back to their homeland. Although no sales are planned for the United States at the moment, Poly began to hold sales in Hong Kong in 2012, putting it in direct competition with Sotheby's and Christie's, which have been holding sales there since 1973 and 1986, respectively. In its most recent spring 2013 sale in Hong Kong, Poly made \$22 million, hardly comparable to Christie's Hong Kong totals of \$418 million and Sotheby's Hong Kong total of \$280 million. (China Guardian has also begun to hold sales in Hong Kong, raising \$38 million in its two-day sale.)

"The Chinese auction houses are healthy competition; they are fast learners, but up to now, I don't see any real competition in Hong Kong," says Kevin Ching, chief executive officer of Sotheby's Asia; his office at Pacific Place in Hong Kong is two floors below Poly's. Both firms hold sales at off-site premises, either the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre or one of the local hotels. "With the things we sell here—wine, watches, jewelry, Southeast Asian art—we are light-years ahead. In terms of getting consignments, we have a global reach because we have been operating for over 200 years, which the mainland auction houses don't have yet."

Ching makes the point that it is not coincidental that the two leading mainland auction houses began doing business in Hong Kong in the past year. China has a high value-added tax of 34 percent on works of art, sold in or brought into the country. This tax had been generally ignored for close to 20 years, thereby allowing mainland firms to bring in material from foreign sources without

penalty. But in 2012, a widespread crackdown, with several arrests, chilled the auction market and led mainland firms to seek the safer waters of Hong Kong, a duty-free zone. "They are now selling paintings consigned by foreign collectors in Hong Kong and paintings coming from mainland sources in China," says Ching, indicating that this strategy has not increased the volume of material offered by Poly; it has just shifted the material between two locations. According to Ching, this is not taking market share away from him.



**Wu Guanzhong's *Lotus Flowers*, 1973, from Sotheby's Hong Kong fall 2013 sale, estimated at \$769,000 to \$1 million.**

## To complicate matters

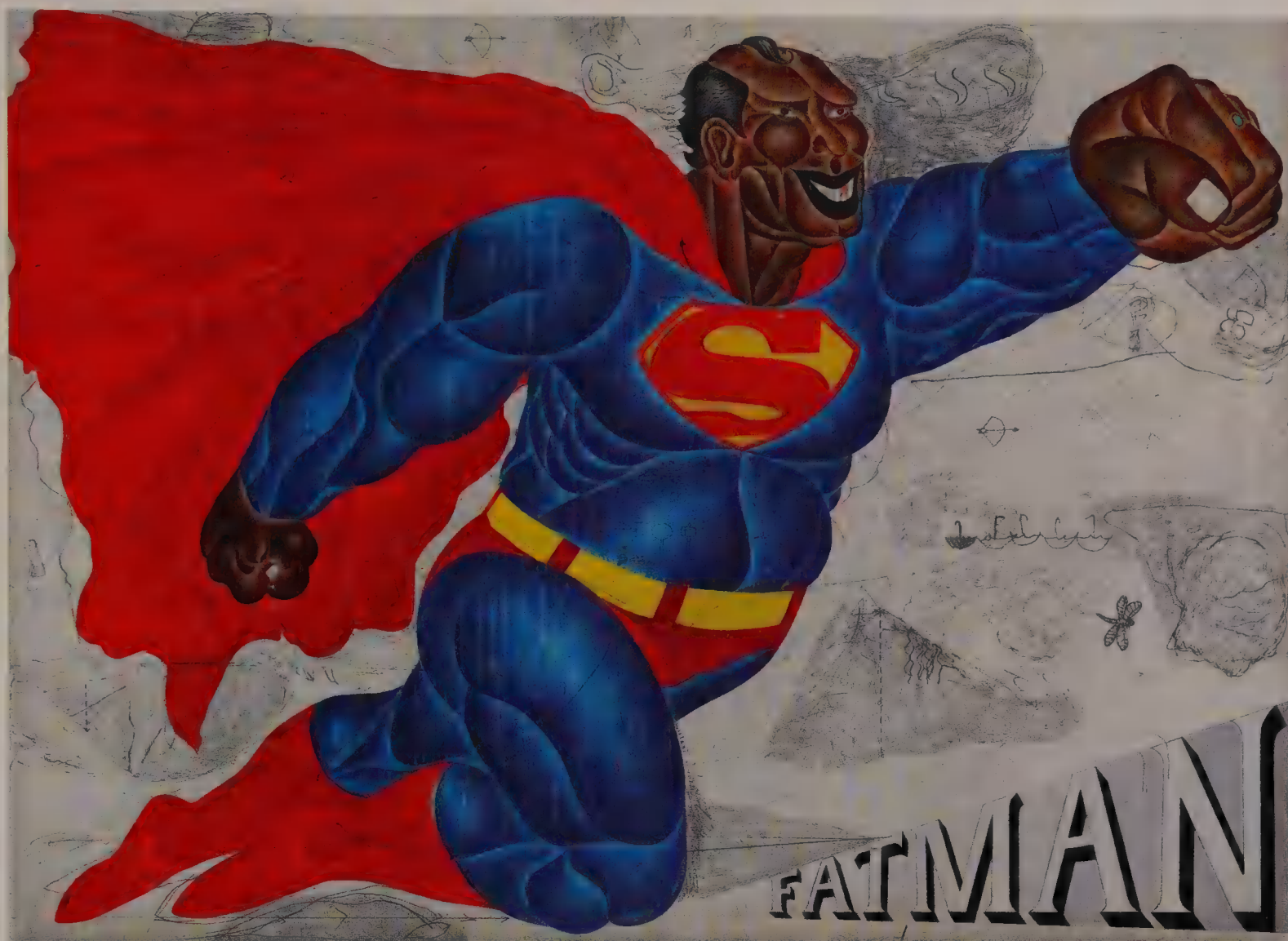
further, Sotheby's recently formed a partnership with the Beijing-based Gehua Cultural Development Group, a state-owned multimedia company, allowing Sotheby's to hold auctions in China. And Christie's, which has registered as a "wholly foreign-owned enterprise" or WFOE—the first independent foreign auction firm to be licensed to do business in China—had its first sale in Shanghai in September. Up until now, foreign auction houses were not allowed to operate in mainland China under any circumstances, and even now, they cannot handle cultural relics, which means any art created before 1949. In a country where classical Chinese paintings and examples of imperial porcelain command the highest prices, this regulation puts foreign firms at a definite disadvantage.

"This is a sale in China but it's not a Chinese sale, it's an inter-

national sale, just as a sale in London is not a London sale," says Jonathan Stone, chairman and international head of Asian art for Christie's, who notes that the auction house will offer wine, jewelry, watches, Chinese contemporary art, and international art. He looks forward to being the first house to sell a Warhol or a Picasso in mainland China. "The whole thing is extremely exciting. I do think it's comparable to how it felt to open in New York 30 years ago. It's one of those big steps."

Zhao is unfazed by the prospect of Sotheby's and Christie's encroaching on his turf. It is his vision that has led the company to pursue an international agenda, and he is sure, at least in China, that he is the leading brand. "It's like it was in China in 1942, during the Civil War. There were two parties—the Communist Party and the Kuomintang. Power shifted one way and then the other. But what the Kuomintang didn't know is that the power and weight were about to change," says Zhao. "We are like the Communist Party, and Sotheby's and Christie's are like the Kuomintang. They have many more resources overseas, but we have the people's faith." ■





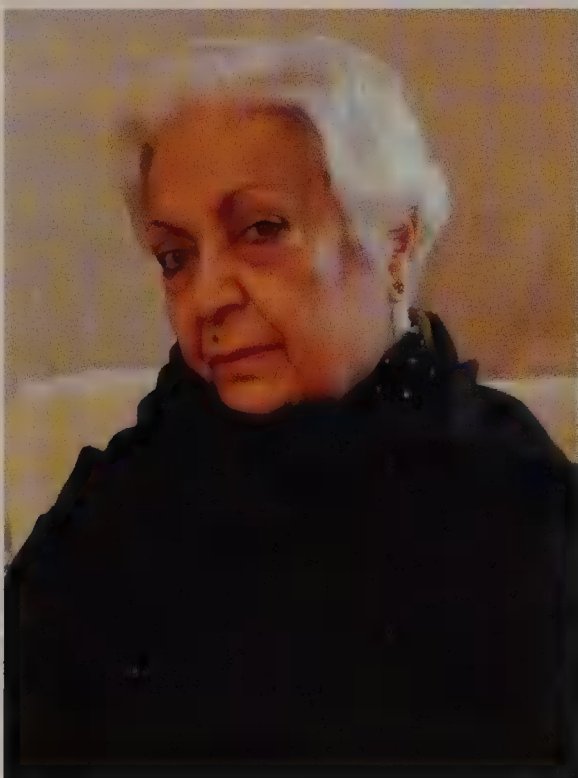
**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** | Nyoman Masriadi's *Fatman*, 2000, and Luo Zhongli's *Late Return (A Lift at Night)*, 1994, from Christie's first Shanghai sale on September 26, 2013; and Rudi Mantofani's *Bayangan Merah (Red Shadow)*, 2009, from Sotheby's Hong Kong's October 5, 2013, sale.



# Pulp Fictions

Paper—sculpted, cast, punctured, sewn into—is the primary medium of Zarina, the Indian-born artist who weaves into her work Urdu calligraphy and the spirit of literature from around the world

**BY CYNTHIA NADELMAN**



**Zarina:**  
“Not being a  
product of art  
school gave  
me freedom.”

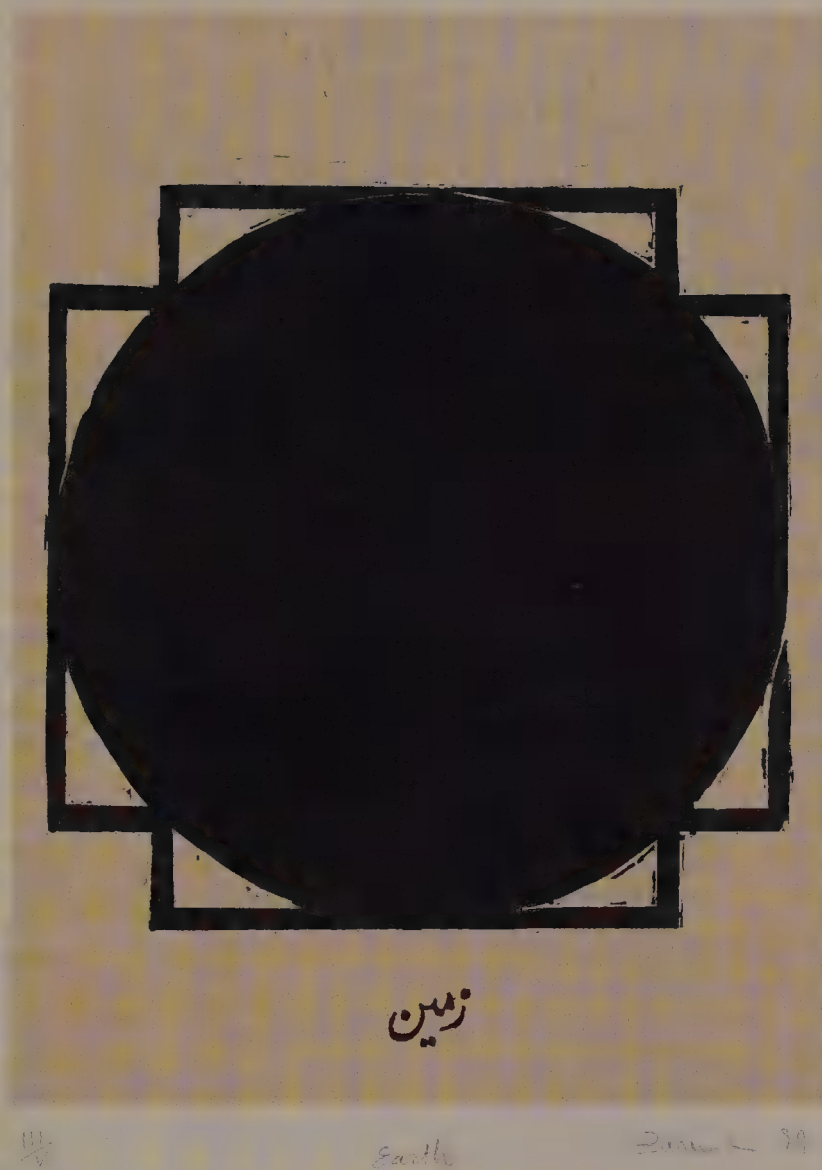
“I don’t really like miniatures. When I look at them, I want to think about Malevich,” Zarina says. In fact, the architecture and the courtyards and gardens of Indian miniatures are often suggested in the minimalist black-and-white distillations of “home” that Zarina has created on paper over a nearly 50-year career.

To the gratification of her many admirers, the work of this Indian-born New York artist has had wide visibility of late. She was recently the subject of a major retrospective, “Zarina: Paper Like Skin,” organized by the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, that traveled to the Guggenheim Museum in New York and closed last month at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2011, Zarina—an American citizen since 1993—was one of five artists representing India in its first-ever entry at the Venice Biennale. Her watershed print portfolio, “Home Is a Foreign Place” (1999), consisting of 36 woodcuts in an edition of five, was recently acquired by a trifecta of major museums: the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The Guggenheim has acquired “Untitled” (1977), a 20-sheet group of white-on-white “pin drawings,” in which grids, swirls, and geometric shapes are pricked into paper.

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*Cynthia Nadelman, an ARTnews contributing editor, is a writer living in New York.*





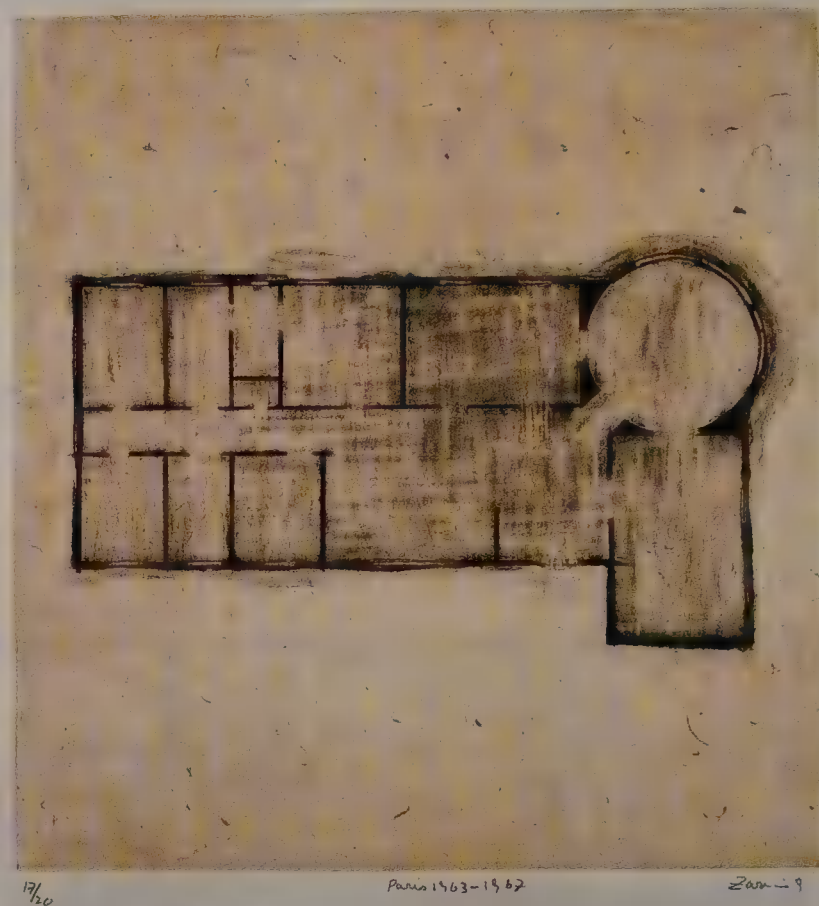
***Earth*, woodcut with Urdu text, from the portfolio "Home Is a Foreign Place," 1999.**



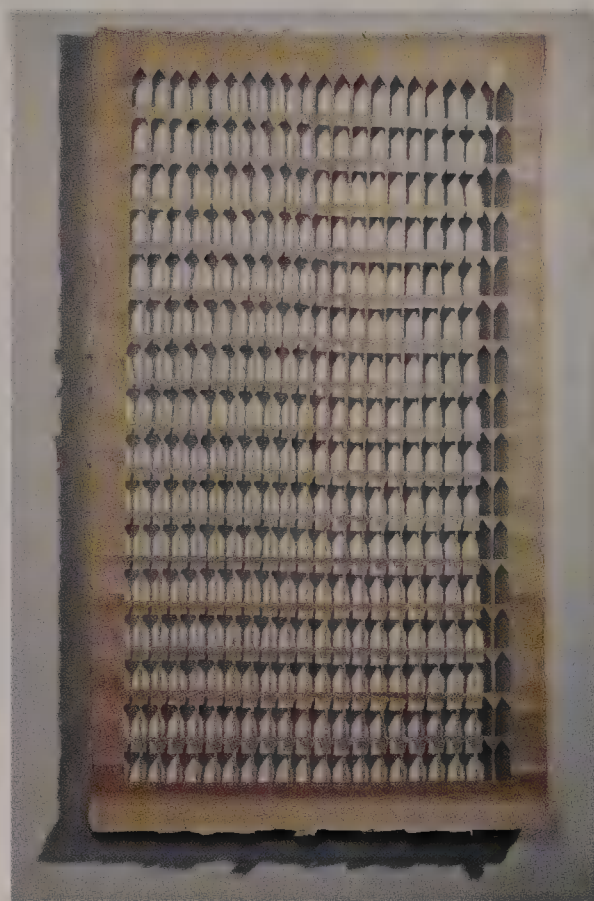
With some exceptions, paper has been Zarina's primary medium—sometimes sculpted or cast directly from pulp; sometimes cut out, punctured, or sewn into; but most often printed on in a variety of methods both traditional and invented. She often includes Urdu calligraphy in her compositions. The spirit of literature that suffuses her conversation also permeates her work. The frequent theme of home and the forms of remembered homes tie her to some of her favorite writers: Proust, Nabokov, Camus, Adrienne Rich, and the late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish.

Allegra Pesenti, curator at the Hammer Museum's Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts and organizer of "Paper Like Skin," says, "I am interested in the ways Zarina pushes the boundaries of the printmaking practice so that it is often not clear whether the work is a print, a drawing, or a sculpture." Pesenti describes her discovery of Zarina's work when it was shown in India several years ago: "Here was a type of abstraction with expression connected to life through the tactility and organic quality of its medium. The cast papers hang on the wall like empty shrines and evoke a sense of loss but also the memory of local street life and Mughal architecture."

**The youngest of four children,** Zarina was born in 1937 in Aligarh, a university town in northern India, where her father taught medieval Indian history at Aligarh Muslim University. Raised a secular Muslim in a home in which books were valued above all else, she says, "I never saw my father going to mosque. I feel I grew up in Hindu culture as much as Muslim.



**ABOVE** *Paris 1963–1967*, etching from the portfolio "Homes I Made/A Life in Nine Lines," 1997. **BELOW** *Shadow House I*, 2006, cut Nepalese paper.



It was much more interesting to me, the Hindu festivals and so on."

Navina Haidar, curator of Islamic art at the Met, whose roots also go back to Aligarh (and who refers to the artist respectfully as "Zarina Auntie"), describes the city thus: "It was traditionally known as a city of refinement. The society was very sweet, tolerant, graceful in its exchanges." Haidar cites the elegiac, poetic quality of the Urdu language—no longer much in use—as helping to define this atmosphere.

Family sightseeing expeditions to mosques and temples instilled in Zarina a lifelong love for the architecture of India. "I associated architecture with building

and I fell in love with building," she says. She had hoped to study engineering at Aligarh Muslim University, but women were not admitted to the engineering college. Her next choice was art school, but her father drew the line at that, urging her to acquire a broader education. So she graduated with a B.S., learning chemistry and mathematics, subjects she thinks have served her well in her understanding of materials.

Jeffrey Warda, paper conservator at the Guggenheim, is impressed by the way Zarina has worked with paper pulp and earth pigments and by her choices and treatments of the papers themselves. She often uses the technique of *chine collé*, attaching one kind of paper (often handmade Nepalese, Indian, or Japanese paper, on which she prefers to print) to a fine-quality manufactured paper such as BFK Rives or Arches.

Zarina married soon after graduating in 1958. Her husband was in India's Foreign Service, and the two embarked on a peripatetic life that began with a posting to



Bangkok. When they returned to their country for the first time, Zarina's family had moved to what had become Pakistan after the Partition of India into two countries, one Hindu and the other Muslim. The family's move from the home in Aligarh, and her memories of the house, would come to feed Zarina's art.

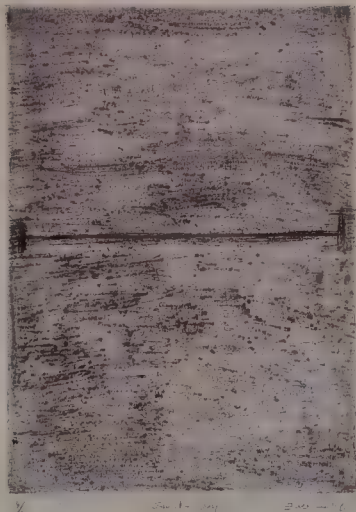
By the mid-1960s, Zarina and her husband were in Paris. There, she studied printmaking at Atelier 17, the renowned workshop of Stanley William Hayter, where prints were considered as important as paintings. She came into contact with international art at this point, and also began to drift away from her husband. In her much later series of etchings "Homes I Made/A Life in Nine Lines" (1997), one of the works is a floor plan of her spacious Paris apartment, subtitled: *Watched the Seine flow by and waited for him to come home.*

By the time she returned to India, to live alone in New Delhi, Zarina was an artist. At a low point, she bought a press to make prints. She says that she felt like a piece of wood in the humid weather and thought, "I have rotted inside." She found some chunks of rotting wood on the street, took them home, cleaned and oiled them, and brought them back to life in the

studio. She began to print impressions of the plain wood, culminating in *Kiss* (1968), a work that pays homage to Brancusi; the cobbled-together *Wall I* (1969); and *Cage* (1970), a relief print of an enclosure that conjured up her beloved Indian courtyards along with a stifling feeling of entrapment. She simply put the pieces of wood together and made relief prints.

"I didn't know what I was doing," she says. "Not being a product of art school gave me freedom." Or, according to David Kiehl, curator of prints and special collections at the Whitney Museum in New York, who acquired two of these prints for the museum, "she broke all the rules." The new work also embodied a Gandhian emphasis on the handmade, and Zarina sometimes used paper made in the recently established papermaking workshops of postcolonial India.

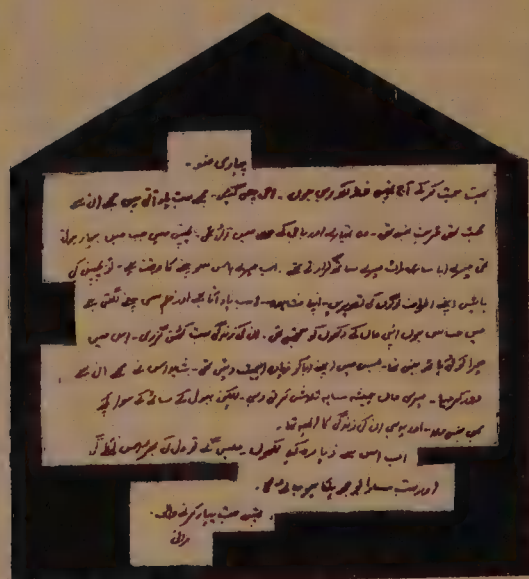
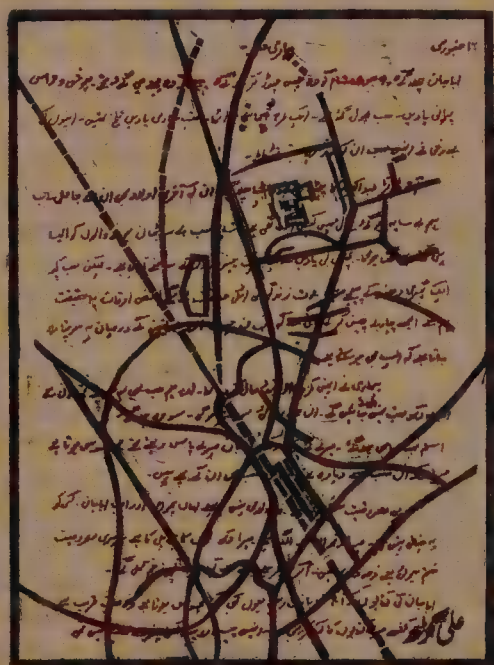
In 1974, Zarina won a fellowship to study with a master printmaker in Japan. From there, she decided to pursue the



**Etchings from the portfolio "Santa Cruz," 1996:**  
***Santa Cruz*** (left),  
***Monterey Bay*** (below left),  
***Night Sea*** (below right).





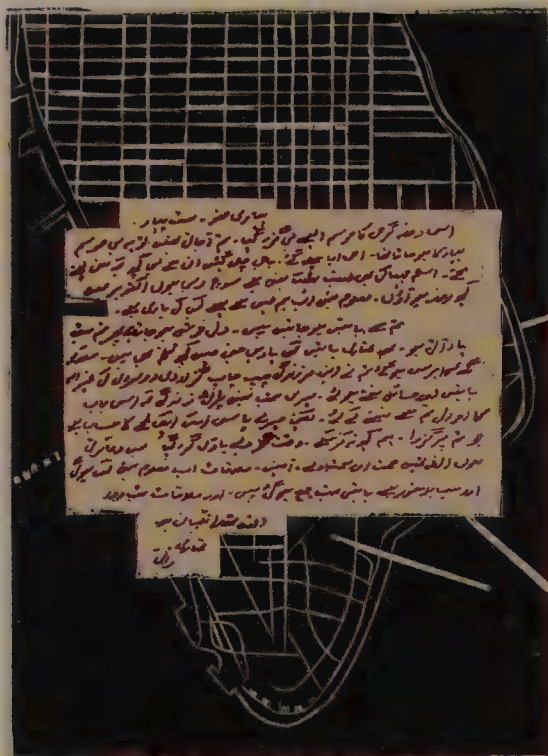


art that most interested her. Two years later, she arrived in New York via Los Angeles and soon set herself up in a Midtown commercial building—the working and living space that has been her primary home ever since.

In the 1980s, Zarina became involved with the New York Feminist Art Institute, serving on its board. She was briefly on the editorial board of *Heresies*, the feminist art journal, and helped produce the “Third World Women” issue long before multiculturalism was a buzzword. Around that time, she dropped both her father’s and her husband’s surnames.

During this period, she began running papermaking workshops. To make ends meet, she pulled prints for other people, and she taught art as an adjunct professor at various universities. Eventually she was spending most of each academic year at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

In her home work space in New York, a wooden sink served to contain many an experiment with materials and pigment. She modeled paper sculptures that are organic in form, and made cast-paper reliefs carved with sharp Plexiglas molds bought on Canal Street. A grid of carved house shapes in the solid 1981 cast-paper *Traces* is echoed in a gossamer 2006 paper



**Woodblock and metalcut prints from the portfolio “Letters from Home,” 2004: Letter II (above left), Letter IV (above right), Letter VII (left).**

cutout, *Shadow House I*, made of Nepalese paper. “I like to cut with a sharp knife,” she says, explaining her penchant for straight lines.

With its cutouts and strong linear elements, Zarina’s art seems full of absences and assertions. Poetic titles seem to encapsulate memories of experience and sensation: phrases like “On long hot summer afternoons everyone slept,” from the 1991 series of etchings “House with Four Walls,” capture a sense of longing. In this print, abstracted window shades, like those that were in the artist’s childhood home, are suggested in the form of freehand horizontal

bands. Essences are summed up: “Santa Cruz” (1996), a series of etchings, is all about the horizon—appropriate for this Pacific location—while New York, from the 1999 “Home Is a Foreign Place,” happens to be two vertical towers, almost Barnett Newman-like zips. In the 1997 portfolio “Homes I Made/A Life in Nine Lines,” *Bangkok* is a classic house shape, raised on stilts.



Zarina's regular communication with her Karachi-based sister, Rani, kept alive her memories of Aligarh, eventually leading to the poignant 2004 "Letters from Home," a series of woodblock and metalcut prints in which abstractions and diagrams of former homes at once frame, outline, or obliterate very personal letters from Rani about the fate of their parents and about their own lives. The layering of different papers with her sister's fine Urdu calligraphy and such elements as a map of lower Manhattan or an outline of a Western-style house epitomizes Zarina's way of combining the layers of life lived in different cultures and geographical zones.

With her wavy silver hair, and often dressed in a silk tunic with matching shawl thrown over her shoulder, Zarina is a striking woman. In her Manhattan home, TV, sofa, bed, desks, work space, and neatly arranged boxes of her prints, as well as museum catalogues (her only evident indulgence), are all organized in one open space. With a kitchen to one side, visitors can count on a properly brewed pot of tea.

Although Zarina says, "I'm bored with the diasporic generation," perhaps not wanting to be lumped into a category that seems hot right now, she has certainly made work that refers to a homeland different from the one she is in and, alternately, from the one in which she was raised. During the period of her special emphasis on home (mid-1990s to mid-2000s), she faced the quintessential threat to New York artists: eviction from her rented loft space. In the end, she prevailed in court, having shown that this was her primary residence—her home.

### Zarina crossed the United States three

times in her first year here; on one of those trips, she took along her sister, niece, and nephew, all packed into a small Honda Civic. She still marvels at Bryce Canyon, the whiteness of the Great Salt Lake, and the collection of Japanese art at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

She says that since the sightseeing trips of her childhood, "I always had a suitcase packed." Only as an adult has she embraced the idea that traveling is part of the history of Islam. "You have to travel to seek God," she says, claiming that she no longer has "any problem talking about God." She recently began making unique works on paper using materials such as obsidian (deep, grainy black covers the surface of *Dark Night of the Soul*, 2011) and gold leaf (applied to paper in *Blinding Light*, 2009). She has discovered pewter leaf and has been building collages with the small squares. These works reveal a newfound spirituality. The titles bespeak the contrasting of psychic darkness with what she has called "divine light."

Even with distractions and administrative chores (for which she now has assistants), Zarina says she tries to work on at least one piece every day.

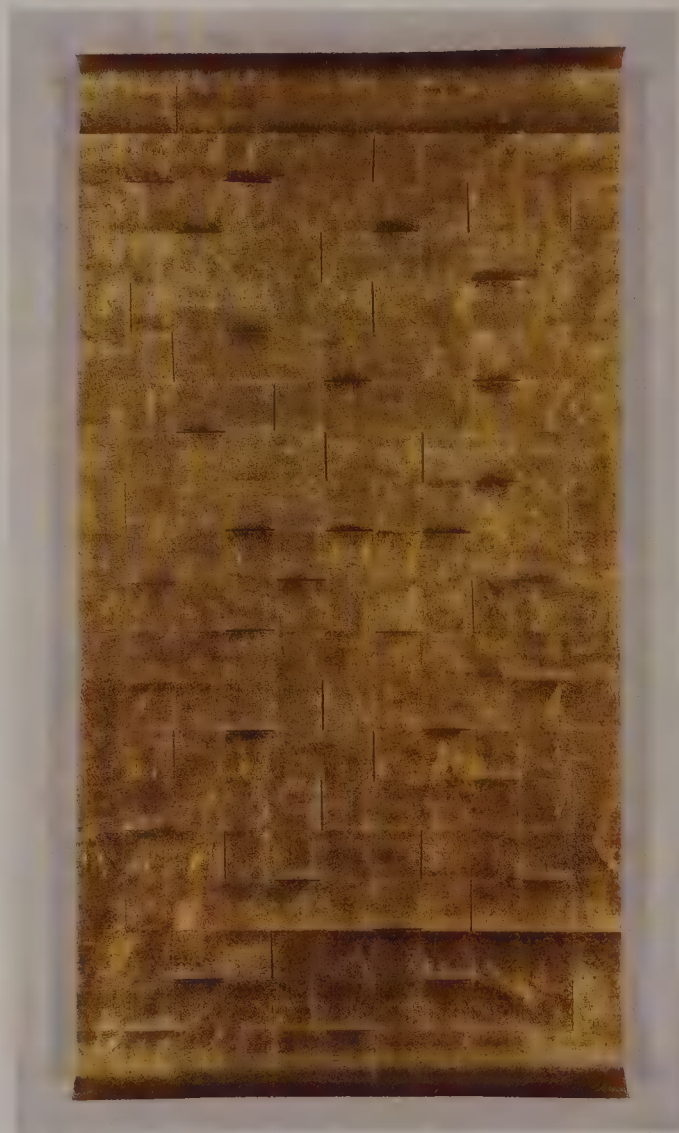
Other recent works, hanging orbs of wood, reference prayer beads. The wood reminds her of how she used to pick up her aunt's sandalwood beads from the floor when the string broke, and would end up with the scent of sandalwood on her fingers. Last year, Zarina

dispatched a nephew in Pakistan to commission the making of a series of lightbulb forms from Afghan marble. In New York, her assistant applied gold leaf to the lower parts of the forms, and they were strung together with plastic tubing. Titled *Frozen Light* (2013), they were shown by Gallery Espace at the Armory Show in New York.

Zarina is represented in New York by Luhring Augustine; in Paris she shows at Galerie Jaeger Bucher, and in New Delhi at Gallery Espace, where she will have an exhibition next year. Her prices range from more than \$10,000 for individual prints to \$100,000 for a major series.

Zarina went three times to the recent Alina Szapocznikow exhibition at MoMA, which was organized by Pesenti when it appeared at the Hammer Museum. She admires the tough, personal engagement of the late, little-known Polish artist, comparing her favorably to Eva Hesse, whose exhibition at the Guggenheim so excited Zarina during an early visit to New York.

Fortunately, curators are bringing new names before the public, as well as a realignment of ideas about who are the "important" artists of our time. Zarina, it seems, has found her place in this cosmos. ■



**Blinding Light, 2009.** The paper has been covered with strips of 22 karat gold leaf.



# ROYAL FLOURISH

The curators of the trove of masterpieces owned by the Queen of England are working to devise new and exciting ways to display them

BY ELIZABETH FULLERTON



**ABOVE** Anthony van Dyck's celebrated triptych of Charles I, 1635–6. **RIGHT** A lace cloak from ca. 1635 thought to have been worn by Charles I. **OPPOSITE** An oil painting of *Elizabeth I when a Princess*, ca. 1546–7, attributed to William Scrots.

Tucked away in the perimeter wall of London's Buckingham Palace and easily missed among the hordes of tourists, the Queen's Gallery is a little-known treasure-house that stages world-class exhibitions of works from Queen Elizabeth's sumptuous art collection. Its current offering, "In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion," which runs through October 6, pairs some 60 key paintings by artists from Hans Holbein the Younger to Anthony van Dyck, with borrowed garments, bringing to life the elaborate ruffs, doublets, and bodices worn by royalty and courtiers during the period.

"This show is looking at portraits in the context of fashion, and not just royal fashion," says Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures. "We're looking at two subjects, not just one. The thing that relates material culture to lifestyle is costume—you're wearing it, it helps you to move in a certain way, and prevents you from moving in other ways."

The juxtaposition of van Dyck's famous portrait of Charles I (1635–6) with an exquisite lace collar, for example—possibly the same one sported by the king in the portrait—demonstrates how such items were worn and highlights the artist's virtuosity in capturing

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the texture of the elaborate collar without eclipsing its wearer's features. As well as serving as a gateway to the era, the show also features explanatory labels and glossaries that decode intimations of social position, marital status, and lineage communicated by the sitters' attire but usually lost on the modern viewer.

A painting attributed to William Scrots (ca. 1546–7), to name one, depicts Elizabeth I at the age of 13, wearing a crimson gown with foresleeves and forepart of silver embroidered with gold. It is more than just a dignified portrait, says the show's curator, Anna Reynolds, who has an M.A. in the history of dress from the Courtauld Institute in London. Such "cloth of silver tissue with gold" was restricted by law to royalty at the time, Reynolds explains, so the young Elizabeth's "clothes are saying that she's of royal blood." This was a defiant message, because after the execution of her mother, Anne Boleyn, in 1536, Elizabeth was officially illegitimate.

This imaginative approach, in which artworks are considered within their wider cultural and historical settings, is something the Royal Collection's curators are striving increasingly to bring to exhibitions. The goal is to broaden the shows' appeal, according to Shawe-Taylor, who was director of the Dulwich Picture Gallery in south London between 1996 and 2005, and has written several books on 18th-century portraiture and conversation painting. As Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures since 2005, Shawe-Taylor has the weighty task of overseeing Queen Elizabeth's collection of 7,000 paintings, 40,000 drawings, and 150,000 prints. This trove includes masterpieces by Caravaggio, Vermeer, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Bruegel the Elder, as well as Andrea Mantegna's 1484–92 series "The Triumphs of Caesar" in Hampton Court Palace; the seven cartoons from the "Acts of the Apostles" tapestries Raphael made for the Sistine Chapel (1515–16), which are on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum; and around 600 drawings by Leonardo da Vinci at Windsor Castle.

Also included in the Royal holdings are a vast array of decorative arts, from tapestries, ornately worked armor and weaponry, and fine porcelain and furniture, to exotic laquerware, gold- and silver-plated tableware, Fabergé objets d'art, and magnificent jewelry. Passed down through royal dynasties over the past 500 years, the collection is one of the few great royal European collections to remain intact. It is officially owned by the monarch (although not by Queen Elizabeth as a private individual) and is "held in trust for her successors and the nation," according to the Royal Collection Trust's website.

While this collection boasts an abundance of Old Masters, rivalling those of the Prado in Madrid or the Louvre



**TOP TO BOTTOM** ▲ 16th-century parure of enameled gold, pearls, rubies, and emeralds. Embroidered gloves from ca. 1595–1605. Queen Mary II's patch box, ca. 1694, made of enameled gold and set with diamonds.





**TOP** Hans Eworth, *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*, 1569. **BELOW LEFT** Joos van Cleve's portrait of Henry VIII, ca. 1530-35. **BELOW RIGHT** Daniel Mytens, *Charles I*, 1628.



in Paris, it contains almost no Impressionists (just one Monet) and only a smattering of modern and contemporary British artists. This is evidence of how, in many ways, the collection has been shaped by the whims of long-dead kings and queens. "It's not comprehensive, and it reflects often-quite-short bursts of financially imprudent enthusiasm on the part of monarchs," notes Shawe-Taylor. "Up to about 1800," he says, "you could take the collection and map it over a systematically acquired Old Master collection in a museum, and you would find a very strong correlation between the two," suggesting an alignment between popular, critical, and royal tastes. After 1800, however, art developed in a more avant-garde direction and was linked to an intellectual bourgeoisie—while royal taste remained conservative, and tied to the Salon.

**H**enry VIII was the first real royal patron of art in Britain—and in the 1530s he employed Holbein as his official painter, commissioned mainly to produce portraits of his court. By contrast, Elizabeth I's interest was apparently confined to paintings of herself. By far the greatest connoisseur among the monarchs was Charles I, whose wholesale purchase of the art collection of the Gonzaga family of Mantua, Italy, in 1627–8, brought to England the Mantegnas, along with a raft of impressive antique and Renaissance sculptures. Charles I was also an avid patron, commissioning many portraits of his family and inner circle from van Dyck (some of which are featured in the current exhibition) as well as buying up portraits of his predecessors—a common practice among royalty, in order to emphasize ancestry. "If you're a Stuart and you need to get out a pencil and paper and work out why you're there, your desire to demonstrate allegiance to the previous dynasty is very important," Shawe-Taylor says.

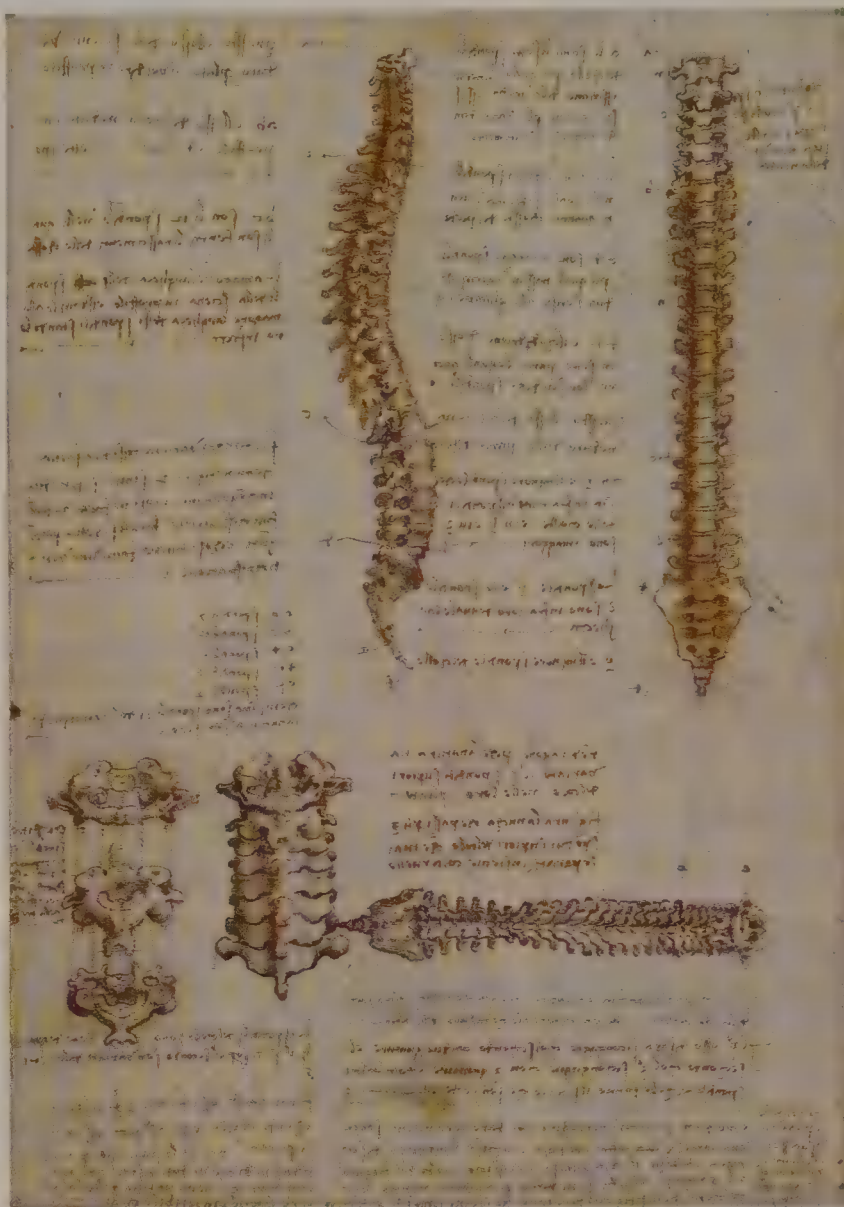
Reflecting the personal tastes of British monarchs

and their advisers over the years, the collection also mirrors the predilections of each era. In 1762, George III purchased the entire collection of the British consul in Venice, Joseph Smith, at the urging of his advisers—acquiring more than 170 Canaletto works; Vermeer's *A lady at the virginals with a gentleman* ("The Music Lesson"), ca. 1662–5; and drawings by Raphael and Michelangelo, all in one swoop. Yet George IV, despite

his generally lavish patronage of art, turned down Rubens's celebrated *Le Chapeau de Paille* (1622–5) on the grounds that it was too expensive, and rejected Jan van Eyck's now iconic *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) because it didn't meet contemporary fancy. Fast-forward to the reign of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and the preference shifts to Salon-style paintings, pictures of animals, and portraits. The Pre-Raphaelites are hardly represented.

These days, the British royal family spends modestly on art, conscious of the political unpopularity of extravagant acquisitions. The Royal Collection Trust, chaired by Prince Charles, occasionally buys works seen as complementing the collection, such as four Warhol silk screens of the queen—acquired in 2012 to mark her Diamond Jubilee—and in 2006, the queen purchased Pietro Annigoni's oil-and-pastel study for his 1969 portrait of her.

While the queen is not involved in the day-to-day management of the collection, she has been instrumental in bringing it into line with modern art institutions, taking an active interest in the lending of works and approving the appointment of senior curators, according to Shawe-Taylor. She regularly visits her galleries, as well as other museums, and particularly admires 17th-century Dutch painting, he notes. Although her interest does not extend to making art, both Prince Philip and Prince Charles are keen amateur painters; their works currently feature in an exhibition at Windsor Castle titled "Royal Paintbox," through January 2014, alongside paintings by past



**One of Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical drawings from ca. 1510–11, on view at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.**



monarchs such as Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and King George III. Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, studied art history at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and has recently become a patron of the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Periodic criticism still arises about public access to the collection, which is distributed across 13 royal residences and former residences, of which eleven are open to the public at certain times of the year. Jonathan Jones, art columnist of the left-leaning *Guardian* newspaper, recently decried the queen's ownership of da Vinci's drawings, arguing that they should be displayed in a public museum rather than in palace galleries as a tourist attraction. "There's something about a gallery attached to Buckingham Palace (or Holyroodhouse) that predefines what happens there as fluffy royal heritage," he wrote.

**T**he Royal Collection's temporary art exhibitions rotate between dedicated galleries in three venues: Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, and the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. The challenge is to devise new and exciting ways to display well-loved pieces, particularly since the Royal Collection Trust does not generally borrow from outside institutions, although it loans many items out. Comparing his job to running an opera house, Shawe-Taylor aims for as wide a variety of works and as fast a turnover as possible in the exhibition programming, balancing crowd-pleasers with innovative fare.

His team appears to have ticked both boxes with "In Fine Style," as well as with the concurrent Royal Collection show, "Leonardo da Vinci: The Mechanics of Man," curated by Martin Clayton and on view at the Palace of Holyroodhouse through early November. Showcasing 30 sheets of da Vinci's anatomical drawings alongside magnetic resonance images (MRI) and computed tomography (CT) scans, the exhibition

demonstrates how the artist's extraordinary representations of the human body foreshadowed 21st-century three-dimensional imaging. "It isn't just about Leonardo as a maker of lovely drawings, or Charles II as collector of Leonardo drawings," Shawe-Taylor says. "It's also about the history of anatomy and medicine." The exhibition features da Vinci's study of a human fetus in the womb (based on a dissected pregnant

cow), the first accurate depiction of the spine, and numerous perspectives of the shoulder and arm muscles.

The highlight for Clayton is two drawings from a sequence recording da Vinci's investigation into the aortic valve of the heart—one he believes would have made Leonardo as renowned a scientist as he was an artist, had his papers not been lost for hundreds of years after he died in 1519. "Even to have conceived that investigation is astonishing," Clayton says, "but to get results that are as accurate and as comprehensive as a modern cardiologist can achieve through real-time MRI scanning . . . I don't know of anything else like it in the whole history of science."

While Clayton hopes the da Vinci exhibition will shed fresh light on the artist's genius in the field of medicine, scholarship and conservation work on the Royal holdings as a whole continue to yield unex-

pected discoveries. New studies have found, for instance, that an important portrait of Richard III dating from 1500–20, and probably commissioned by Henry VII or Henry VIII, was touched up to make the sitter appear deformed and his facial expression severe, reflecting the Tudor family's desire to tarnish its predecessor's image. "It looks like we're reconstructing more precisely a story of Tudor propaganda," says Shawe-Taylor. "You know, 'No I don't want it looking like that, I want him looking a bit shiftier, more hunchbacked.'" The portrait—accurate or not—has indeed affected perceptions of Richard down the ages, proving the power of the paintbrush in shaping historical memory. ■



**Da Vinci's sketch of a human fetus in the womb, ca. 1511.**



# 'The Pop Object'

Acquavella

This dense show, subtitled "The Still Life Tradition in Pop Art," brought the whole Pop spread to the table.

Cleverly curated by art historian John Wilmerding, the show enabled Pop to make its point. Or, several points: It both celebrated and ridiculed object worship, it alluded to consumerism yet showed how much fun consumption can be, and it let us indulge in nostalgia not only for the playful images themselves but also for the culture of their time. Here were iconic pieces and unfamiliar ones by well-known and lesser-known artists.



Tom Wesselmann, *Still Life #34, 1963*, acrylic and collage on panel, 47½" diameter.

Of course, it was strange seeing this gathering of mostly banal objects in such a highfalutin French Neoclassical townhouse. But the setting enabled Pop to do what it does best—engage with and defy its context.

The show was divided into categories, including The Still Life Tradition and American Pop, Food and Drink, Flowers, Housewares and Appliances, and Body Parts and Clothing.

In the entryway, in effect telling viewers how to read the show, was Roy Lichtenstein's *Mirror I* (1976), in painted and patinated bronze, reflecting nothing. It

offered us an inscrutable look at the artwork, and ourselves—ultimately intercepting narcissism.

Then, filling the two floors of capacious rooms was an exceptional gallery of still lifes: a strangely melancholic Lichtenstein painting *Black Flowers* (1961), and Larry Rivers's uncharacteristic cut-steel vase of artistic contradictions, titled *Steel Plant II Rubber* (1959).

From modern takes on traditional subjects came literal reflections on art and its making, including Vija Celmins's witty 1967 wood eraser and 1966 painting with graphite, dead-panly titled *Pencil*, and Edward Kienholz's *Cement TV* (1969). The eraser as symbol is scary and reassuring, hinting at obliteration and self-correction, as was also evident in Claes Oldenburg's bent and crumpled vinyl *Typewriter Eraser* (1970), installed near Andy Warhol's earnest 1961 painting *Typewriter (1)*.

Alimentary subjects abounded in all their charm and vulgarity, not least James Rosenquist's *Orange Field* (1964), a.k.a. spaghetti; Oldenburg's graceful, super refined 1983 stainless-steel rendering *Tilting Neon Cocktail* (think Brancusi's *Endless Column*); Ed Ruscha's supremely subtle, laconic drawing *Lemon Drops* (1962); and many homages to Coca-Cola, from Tom Wesselmann's to Marisol's.

In fact, Wesselmann's acrylic and collage *Still Life #34* (1963) brilliantly captures the allure and artificiality of America's iconic products and pleasures. Set in a traditional tondo panel, the updated classical still life includes a strawberry ice-cream soda, a bottle of Coca-Cola, a pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes, two walnuts, an uncomfortably positioned yellow pear, and a blue vase with bright-red roses.

After food came themes of living and coping, suggested in the 1963 *Untitled Pillow with lightbulbs* by Stephen Antonakos (who died August 19), and Rosenquist's *Idea—Middle of the Night* (2007), a lightbulb with pencil and electric wiring on wood. It's a wonderful sight gag and a visually elegant object, one that brilliantly captures the unfathomable potential of generating an idea.

This was Pop prime, rendering mute the persistent high/low art dichotomy, for what, indeed, elevates one object, or idea, over another? —Barbara A. MacAdam



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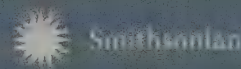
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Cachepot, c.1931. Stylized leaf design; green glossy glaze. Aurelia Arbo, decorator;  
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## Paul McCarthy

**Hauser & Wirth and Park Avenue Armory, Hudson River Park, and Randall's Island**

It was the long, hot New York summer of Paul McCarthy, the polarizing, X-rated Los Angeles artist whose name has become synonymous with the gross, the lewd, the manic—and also the entertaining. Two of his six recent exhibitions featured outdoor sculptures, shown in Hudson River Park (*Sisters*, 2013) and on Randall's Island (the 80 foot tall *Balloon Dog*, 2013) during Frieze Art Fair. Three exhibitions were at Hauser & Wirth. A group of enormous Disney characters (a McCarthy fixation) in lustrous walnut were presented in Chelsea, followed by “Rebel Dabble Babble,” a 12-channel, full-on raunchfest.

Set in a semblance of 1950s suburbia, “Rebel” was made in collaboration with the artist's son Damon McCarthy. It's a demented, hard-core riff on the making of the 1955 film *Rebel Without a Cause*, with actor Elyse Poppers as Natalie Wood, Paul McCarthy as director Nicholas Ray, porn star James Deen as James Dean, and a cameo by the versatile James Franco, also as James Dean. Franco had originated the project but soon dropped out. One unforgettable scene takes place in a bathtub, and features a close-up of McCarthy's scrotum, wet with excrement-colored slime, as he squirts a bag of it over Poppers's face and naked breasts. That's just for starters.

Hauser & Wirth's uptown venue presented the unexpectedly appealing “Life Cast.” It consisted of an analytical video of the process of making as-real-as-it-gets nudes of McCarthy and his muse Poppers in silicone, paint, and hair, with the results on display.

In the life casts, Poppers looks sweetly innocent, utterly vulnerable, unlike her kinky portrayal as Natalie Wood or White Snow in “WS”—Snow White backward. A kind of sequel to “Rebel,” “WS”—the supersize film and sculptural installation at the Park Avenue Armory—proved the most histrionic of all, chockablock with McCarthy's trademark mayhem. On a platform the size of a small island in the center of the oceanic space of the Drill Hall, McCarthy created a slightly under-scale copy of his childhood home in Utah, surrounded by an impenetrable Technicolor, very fake looking tropical forest of



Paul McCarthy/Damon McCarthy, “Rebel Dabble Babble,” 2011–12, mixed media, installation view. Hauser & Wirth.

plastic flora. Part of the re-created house is outside the forest, its carefully replicated Middle American rooms visible through windows and openings in the walls, the interiors trashed, daubed in what seems to be blood and other bodily fluids. It is empty of people except for the naked, mutilated bodies of a man and woman.

There was also an epic seven-hour film revealing the events that had occurred inside the house, projected onto enormous screens at the front and back of the space. Beginning with White Snow stumbling

upon the house of the dwarfs, the film spirals into the unholy.

McCarthy's work might be called outrageous, debauched, and stomach turning, splattered as the characters are with despoiled food, urine, feces, and vomit, or it might be called a critique, an (expensive, visually dazzling) cautionary tale of a culture corrupted, its morals in disarray. Or it might be a corrupted critique. Was it transgressive? Not when compared with our daily dose of toxic news—and McCarthy puts on the far better show.

—Lilly Wei



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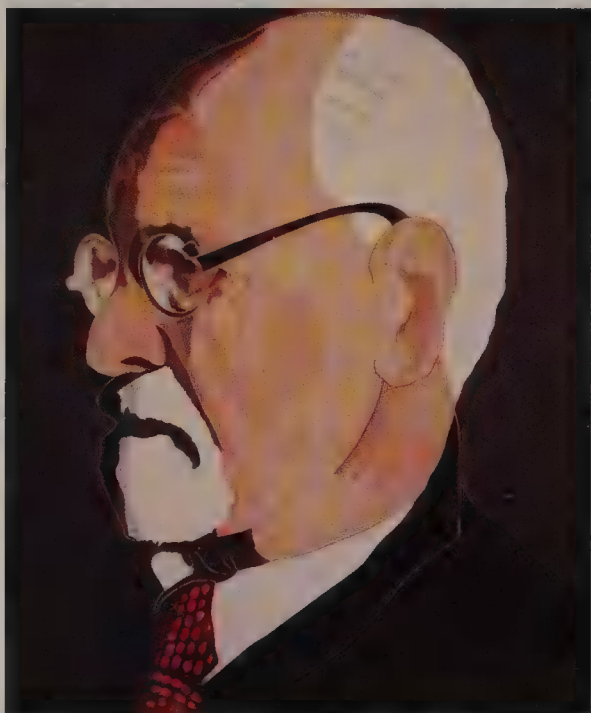
## 'Surface Tension'

**Sundaram Tagore**

In the entryway to the gallery, viewers immediately confronted Lee Waisler's image of a disgruntled Sigmund Freud, his face limned by wood siding filled in with paint. This group exhibition brought together artists for whom the manipulation of tension, often to striking effect, was the subject itself. Devoted to work in uncommon materials, the show featured eight highly disparate artists who created sculptures, paintings, and metal constructions. The materials varied from fine Japanese mulberry paper to sheets of pure steel. Miya Ando, for one, anodizes and dyes aluminum to gorgeous effect: in her *Yume Dream Purple* (2013), a rosy purple sheet of metal is defined by a faint hint of straight lines etched beneath the smooth surface.

Equally delicate were Hiroshi Senju's works on paper. His *Waterfall* (2012) looks like a mythic act of nature, as white streams shoot down (or up) into a black, barren landscape. On second look, however, the dramatic white lines appear more like the erosions left by salt water on a black mass, giving the work's title a double meaning.

Other pieces showed artists more rigorously confronting the surface itself. Nathan Slate Joseph's practice involves applying pure pigment to steel, which creates textures that are as mottled and uneven as something natural. In *Look for*



Lee Waisler, *S. Freud*, 2009, acrylic and wood on canvas, 72" x 60". Sundaram Tagore.

*me in the Sand* (2011) his experiments are patchworked onto a flat canvas shape that conjures sand, using yellow, gray, and orange bruising of color set off by sea spray-like speckles. Joseph's works were most arresting when seen from up close: viewers had to strain to find the narratives that made the paint stress the metal so severely, and vice versa. There is drama even in what the paint can and will not do.

—Ali Pechman

## 'Andre, Flavin, Judd, McCracken, Sandback'

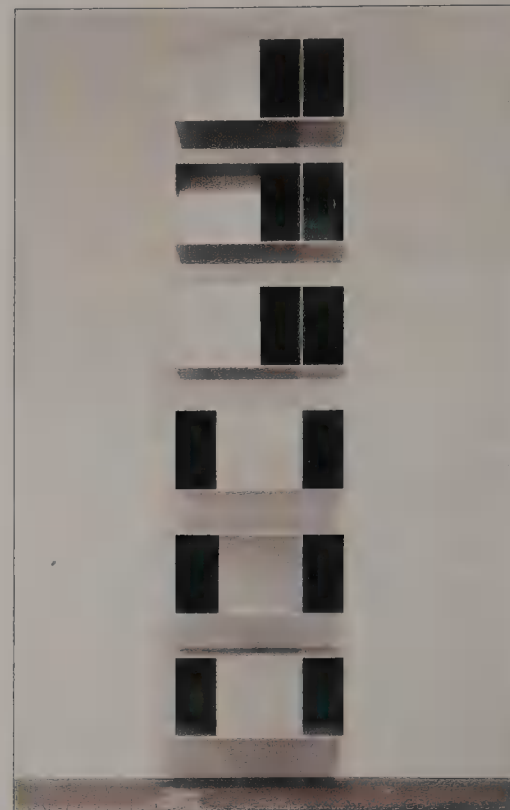
**David Zwirner**

Here were five superb works by five exemplary sculptors arrayed in Zwirner's astounding 20th Street space seemingly created to show each work to its best advantage. This show constituted a primer for understanding American sculpture produced between 1969 and 1991. Each piece, while acknowledging sculpture's relationship to painting and architecture, answered in its own way questions about how sculpture creates, defines, and occupies space.

Fred Sandback's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (*Sculptural Study, Twenty-part Vertical Construction*), 1991/2011, pays homage to Mondrian's 1942–3 painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie*. Certainly it deploys Mondrian's colors, but at the same time it translates Mondrian's own homage to the dynamism of Manhattan and the city's jazz into verticality. As always, Sandback used tenuous materials—here red, yellow, and blue acrylic yarn—to create a temporary utopia.

Carl Andre's *5 Corners* (1970), in the room to the left of Sandback, defined a space through paradox: the four corners of the huge area were delineated by 24-by-24-inch steel plates in four 36-piece groups. Andre invites us to link his sculptural geometry to the vertical geometry of the room itself—the fifth corner.

Dan Flavin's "monument" for V. Tatlin (1969–70) is one of a series of fluorescent sculptures dedicated to the Russian Constructivist.



Donald Judd, *Untitled (Menziken 88-27)*, 1988, anodized aluminum clear with green Plexiglas, six units, each 19 3/4" x 39 3/8" x 19 3/4". David Zwirner.

Tatlin's attempt to fuse art and architecture was thwarted by politics during the Soviet era, but his avant-garde desire to make new art for a new society echoes in Flavin's redeployment of industrial light for artistic purposes. Thus Flavin's wall piece is simultaneously a collage and an architectonic structure.

John McCracken's *Siskiyou* (1988), a rectangular solid 96 by 27 by 14 inches, looks like a model skyscraper, but its title alludes to the northern California county where Mount Shasta is located. So, McCracken simultaneously evokes architecture and the sublime of nature so much a part of American art. Simplicity itself, the sculpture seizes control of its space and demands we take it into account.

Donald Judd's *Untitled (Menziken 88-27)*, 1988, consists of six rectangular units each 19 3/4 by 39 3/8 by 19 3/4 inches. Here we see the Baroque Judd, as opposed to the Minimalist Judd. The incredible work is itself a kind of building with some floors identical to others but some subtly different so that as our eye moves up higher and higher we become confused. Each rectangle is enough like the others to give the illusion of uniformity, but the differences make us realize that uniformity is only an illusion, and that the power of the piece derives from its dizzying variety.

—Alfred Mac Adam



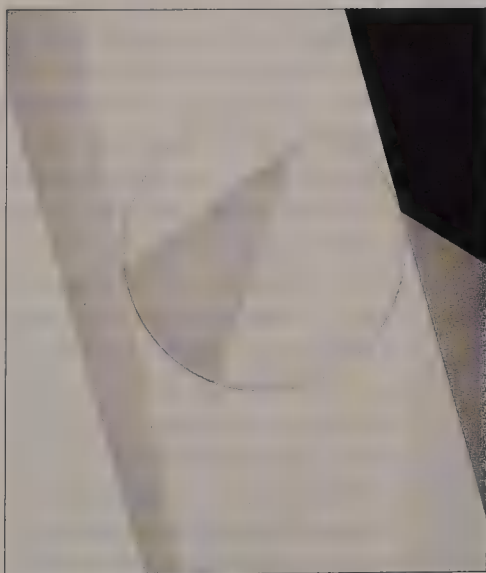
## 'Portfolios from Peter Blum Edition'

**Peter Blum**

Every picture here told a story—though maybe not the whole story. This show included six sets of multiples by six artists, spanning nearly 20 years. Each approaches its subject from a very different perspective.

John Baldessari's diptych *Heaven and Hell* (1988) typifies the appropriationist strategy of recombination—mixing a boxer's upper torso and gloves, male faces with odd mouths, and a medieval depiction of Satan gorging himself on several of the damned. By contrast, Louise Bourgeois's *Triptych for the Red Room* (1994) addresses an emotional state, depicting the sexual exploitation of a female figure by a male and another female, with a hermaphrodite standing by. The work, consisting of three aquatints with drypoint and engraving, is based on the artist's 1993 bronze *Arch of Hysteria*.

Matthew Day Jackson's *Dymaxion Series: Missing Link (Lady Liberty)*, 2007, is more artistically introspective, featuring a pattern invoking Buckminster Fuller's triangular structures (dymaxions) screened on an exhibition poster showing a rear view of Degas's *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen*. Two eerie-looking panels hang below—one with a skull in a tree, the other with what resembles a snaking metal form. "Furrows" (1989), by Terry Winters, is a portfolio of five woodcuts, each about two feet high. The



David Rabinowitch, "Birth of Constructivism: Sequence for Vertov I-VII," Print III, 1993, line etching and aquatint, 35" x 24". Peter Blum.

contrasting grains of oak and mahogany give tonal depth and visual texture to the swellings of roughly parallel lines that derive from views of the human brain.

A wide range of luminescent grays animates the seven-part "Birth of Constructivism: Sequence for Vertov I-VII" (1993), David Rabinowitch's homage to the maker of the experimental 1929 film *Man with a Movie Camera*. These sheets are worked in various intaglio techniques and feature subdivided disks, which could refer to lenses or apertures, enclosed in irregularly shaped polygons. Fifteen pigment prints from Alfredo Jaar's "The Sound of Silence" (2006) were hung for this show in an imposing grid some nine feet high. The images were shot in the prison on Robben Island where Nelson Mandela spent 18 years. The sequence implies a narrative of captivity and repression, with a twist: the first image—of the distant, fog-bound island—includes the wake of the boat that carried the photographer. So the story begins with a departure, suggesting that its narrative is a memory, or that time's arrow might fly backward.

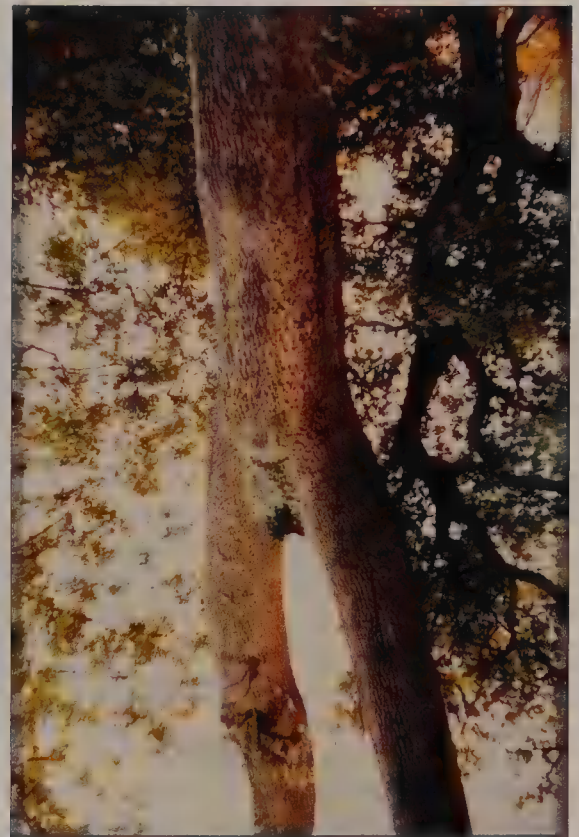
—Stephen Maine

## 'Something about a Tree'

**FLAG Art Foundation**

In descriptions of art about trees, the p-word (that is, poetic) has a habit of showing up. But not in this review. That's because curator, critic, and roving art journalist Linda Yablonsky managed to pull together works by 51 contemporary artists who, for the most part, avoid rendering trees in a strictly lyrical manner. There were, however, certain visual rhymes.

Jim Hodges strategically cut several leaves and petals out of a photograph of blossoming branches for his *London II (pink and blue)*, 2006–9, and did so to three-dimensional effect. Similarly, Yuken Teruya transformed a Japanese translation of Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* into a pop-up book by tracing the illustrated branches with a fine blade. A mighty oak hangs upside down in Rodney Graham's black-and-white photograph *Welsh Oaks*



Sarah Lucas, *Tree Faerie*, 1995, C-print, 40½" x 27¾". FLAG Art Foundation.

(#2), 1998. And Sarah Lucas turned her 1995 photo *Tree Faerie* on its head so as to point out the resemblance between the split branches and a female crotch. In Robert Gober's graphite drawing from 2006, a hollow tree trunk gives birth to a smaller tree, which enters the world feet first, wearing shoes.

Given their inherently sculptural nature, some of the liveliest trees here appeared in three dimensions. Brendan Lynch soaked a pile of charred timber in glitter for the garish *After the party is the after party* (2013). Bill Burns carved the names of 12 art-world insiders—Agnes Gund, Jerry Saltz, and François Pinault—onto a bundle of alder and serviceberry sticks. Leaning against a nearby wall was *Pinocchio (after Carlo Collodi)*, 1991, a log with googly eyes created by Tim Rollins & K.O.S. It was hard to see how Rob Wynne's mirrored mushroom sculptures would be construed as trees. But Anya Gallaccio's *the sunset tree* (2007), with its bronze twigs and pinecones, could be mistaken for no other life form.

For those who thought the tree had gone by the wayside as an important subject in art, this high-energy show revealed that the regal plant remains firmly rooted in artists' imaginations.

—Trent Morse



## Sergei Isupov

Barry Friedman Ltd.

This Russian-born, United States-based artist presented a new body of figurative tabletop-size work in ceramic and porcelain under the title "Call of the Wild." Sergei Isupov's elaborately detailed creations were oddly shaped inter-species creatures covered in surreal narrative details.

Dreamlike visual stories appeared on every surface—even the unseen underside of some works—and each depicted some form of anxiety or mild, often sexual, threat. *The Challenge* (2012) is a vertical male figure in polka-dot shorts shown tussling with a bear in order to get to the black-and-white nude female drawn onto the bear's back. The scratches on the man's back and his frozen grimace convey the intensity of the struggle. As in many of the sculptural works, whimsy is mixed with nightmarish frustration and three dimensions morph into two—and back again. Heads could be seen growing limbs and skin bursting into flames. Deciphering one of Isupov's figures is a futile but tempting assignment that requires prolonged consideration



Sergei Isupov, *The Fear Has Big Eyes*, 2013, porcelain, 21" x 19" x 11". Barry Friedman Ltd.

three-dimensional doll-like woman is standing, as if inside a dreamworld of her own, on his curly tail. The artist's frequent variations in the surface and texture of each work, whether matte or glossy, smooth or covered in bumps, add yet another layer to the expertly realized surprises on display.

—Doug McClemon

and demands the eye keep moving. As in dreams, any left-brained or objective interpretation is thwarted by some other aspect of the intense, often beautiful, illogic of the piece.

The elderly green monkey figure in *The Fear Has Big Eyes* (2013) sports a large white moustache and dangling phallus. His back is "tattooed" with a painted depiction of a man and woman in erotic embrace, and a

## 'Contained Conflict'

Driscoll Babcock

Visitors to this intense, psychologically charged group exhibition were greeted by 10 ceramic male figures standing at attention on rusted metal plinths. The somewhat baffled-looking young men, created by Israeli artist Varda Yatom, were modeled on wedding cake figurines. Several are wrapped loosely in wire, suggesting the tension young Israeli men experience embarking on domestic life and anticipating military engagement.

Hanging elsewhere in the gallery was an untitled oil-and-encaustic abstraction by Ross Bleckner from 1981, consisting of horizontal black lines that nearly obliterate the white sections behind them; it's a particularly handsome yet fraught image.

Embodying the theme of poetry within strife is Harriet Bart's suite of 10 drawings from a set of 160. Each four-by-four-inch "portrait" was created from the wispy black remnants of candle smoke, and each bears the name of a worker lost in the 1911 New York City fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, one of the deadliest industrial disasters in U.S. history.

Pieter Hugo's pair of large C-prints from 2009–10 showing electronic-waste-filled slums in Ghana is especially affecting. Arguably, however, the most

unsettlingly lovely of the works on view were two ink-jet photographs by Wafaa Bilal. Taken from the artist's "Ashes Series," the dimly lit images depict meticulously detailed dioramic models of locations from the Iraq War. The artist removed the individuals from the original photographs and replaced them with 21 grams of cremated human remains.

A few of the other artists in this moving exhibition were Doug Argue, Paulo Laport, Bahar Behbahani, Margaret Bowland, Marylyn Dintenfass, and Robert Longo.

Each of the artists here mined recent history to discover powerful moments of quiet beauty within situations of stress and strife.

—Doug McClemon



Wafaa Bilal, *The Ashes Series: Chair*, 2003–13, archival ink-jet photograph, 40" x 50". Driscoll Babcock.



## 'Looking Back'

### Forum

This diverse show featured alternately thoughtful, humorous, and anxious-looking paintings, sculptures, and drawings by such artists as George Grosz, Gaston Lachaise, Willem de Kooning, and Edward Hopper, among others.

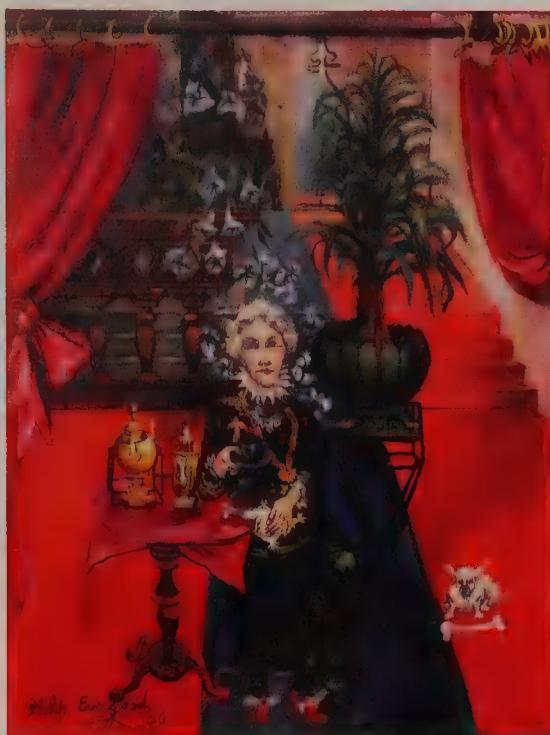
The elegant treatment of the human form was one of the most outstanding aspects of the exhibition. Alexander Archipenko's bronze sculpture *Torso, var. II* (1945), for example, presents the female body as something abstract yet knowable. This is also true of Jacques Lipchitz's Cubist terracotta sculpture *Liseuse (Woman Reading)*, 1919, in which a seated woman with angular features and long hair grasps an open book.

By contrast, Elie Nadelman's curvaceous and exaggerated *Standing Female Nude* (ca. 1909–15) evokes a sense of movement and litheness; while Joseph Hirsch's 1964 drawing *Booth*, featuring two fleshy nude women close together in a phone booth, is edgy and provocative. Figures come to life in Larry Rivers's exuberant pastel-on-paper work *Dancers* (2001), in which a man in a suit pulls his dance partner close, as the skirt of her beautiful red dress sways with the movement of her body.

The portraits in this show were dynamic and varied in their tone, style, and subject matter. The mood is pensive and tense in Raphael Soyer's *Donna Dennis and Rosemary Mayer* (1981); and in Eugene Speicher's painting *Young Girl in Pink Dress* (ca. 1935), the subject's facial expression is at once unhappy and ornery.

Then there was Gregory Gillespie's strange but intriguing *Lady with Jewels* (1969), depicting a grinning woman with a beaded necklace and headpiece pulling down the fabric of her elaborate dress and exposing her left breast. And in another peculiar work, *Cup of Tea* (1946) by Philip Evergood, an old woman is seated in a stately home, while beside her rests a small dog with a bone that's wider than its body. Walking through this exhibition, the many faces in these portraits seemed to return the viewer's gaze, giving a dual meaning to the show's title, "Looking Back."

—Stephanie Strasnick



Philip Evergood, *Cup of Tea*, 1946, oil on canvas, 33" x 25". Forum.

## Steven Alexander, Logan Grider, Robert Reed

### David Findlay Jr.

Echoes of the Color Field painters, the American modernists, and the Abstract Expressionists were all in evidence in this exhibition, featuring paintings and collages by contemporary artists Logan Grider, Steven Alexander, and Robert Reed.

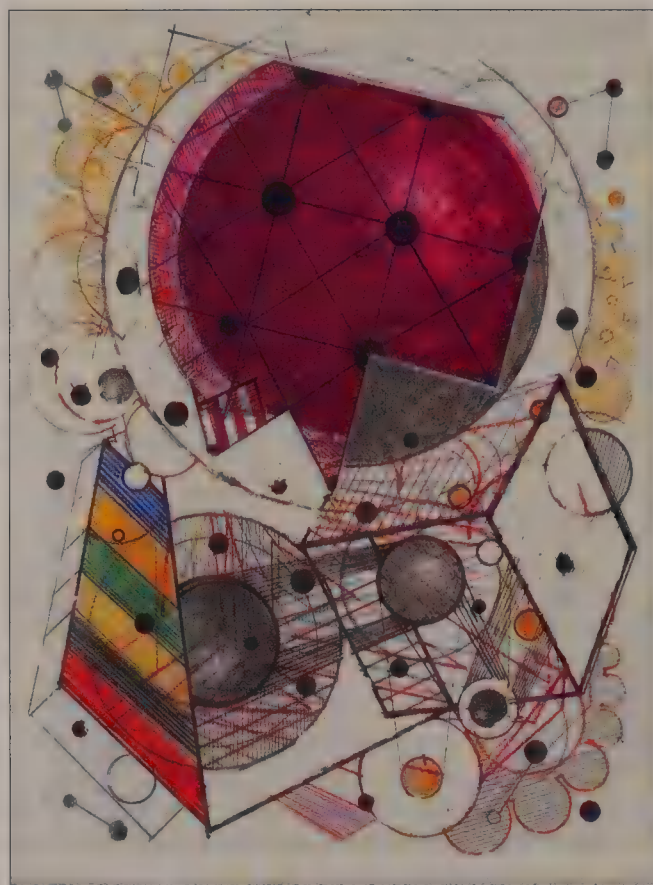
In Grider's encaustic paintings, muted, abstracted forms intersect in the rhythmic style of the American modernists. This was particularly evident in the artist's largest work here, *Self* (2012), revealing impeccably delineated red, white, orange, and blue shapes that distinctly recall the canvases of Morgan Russell. What most distinguishes Grider's pieces, though, are their waxy, textural finish—a trademark of encaustic painting, which provides a welcome contrast to the strictly controlled compositions.

More polished and minimal were Alexander's works. With their sleek applications of pigment in carefully executed patterns and shapes, the paintings came off as pristine and meditative. In *Source* (2013), two thick, red stripes, each a different shade, are bookended by thin bars of gray and purple. These darker hues bring out the richness and vibrancy of the reds, making them appear to be advancing outward. Entrancing blues comprise the magnetic work *Poet III* (2013), in which four vertical bands of color that transition from royal to cerulean blue fill the picture plane. The yellow and brown border frames the composition and helps bring out the dynamism of the blues.

The smaller but no-less-commanding pieces by Reed rounded out the show. In collages like *Antibes Playground* and *MPLS* (both 2002), interconnected networks of Kandinsky-like circles and lines suggest futuristic celestial maps. Reed's cosmic, energetic works are a technical achievement and demonstrate an almost-scientific attention to detail.

Though these three painters were largely informed by 20th-century art, each presented abstract works with an original contemporary twist.

—Stephanie Strasnick



Robert Reed, *MPLS*, 2002, collage, 12½" x 8½". David Findlay Jr.



## Glenn Goldberg

Jason McCoy

Glenn Goldberg's exhibition "Other Places" consisted of a whimsical, exceedingly refined series of 30 small, 16-by-12-inch paintings. The canvases were thinly painted with acrylic washes of various shades of gray and then embellished with delicate black-and-white ink dots, dashes, and lines. Mythical animals, silhouettes of children's toys—teddy bears, ducks, bunnies, and gingerbread homunculi—along with awkward flying birds, flowers, crescent moons, leaves, and abstract shapes emerge. A surprisingly wide variety of warm and cool shades are produced by the spacing and sizes of the marks and by the colors underlying them.

An icy winter atmosphere of snowflakes and sleet is evoked, along with infinite expanses of star-spangled outer space. The scale and the imagery also brought to mind Persian and Indian miniature paintings.

*Other Place 12* (all works 2013), among the most mysterious and simple of the paintings on view, is loosely divided diagonally by a thin white wash that flows over the previously black-stained canvas. Tiny black dashes materialize into the silhouette of a creature resembling a dog or a lion with popping eyes whose tiny black centers placed on discs are the largest white marks in the painting. Two human head shapes float above and below—their eyes, conversely, shaped by circles of white applied over black. Their resulting expressions of starry-eyed befuddlement contrast with the alert stare of the animal.

These images could have been created by a child with a restrained esthetic marked by control and order. The mute creatures in the paintings lack noses and mouths, and their eyes are the only sensing features. They communicate by looking and touching one another—ethereal constellations that quietly coexist in a gentle, small-size universe.

—Elisabeth Kley



Glenn Goldberg, *Other Place 6*, 2013, acrylic and ink on canvas, 16" x 12". Jason McCoy.

## 'Sunsets and Pussy'

Marianne Boesky

The saucy, provocative title of this show has got to be one of the best ways of describing a summer vacation. Sunsets and pussy may be clichéd associations with the season, but at this humorous group show, four artists revealed how much creativity can be found in the most banal of subject matter.

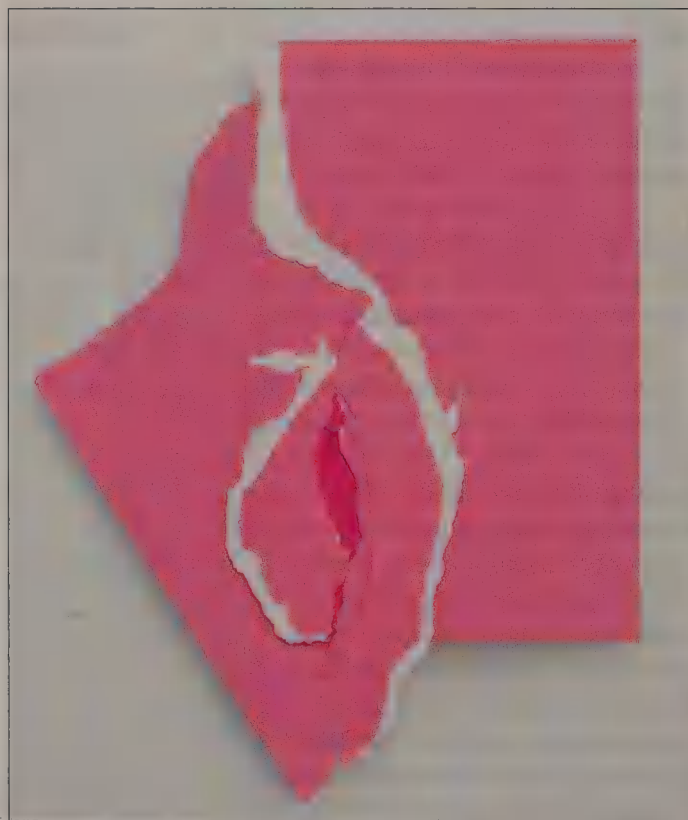
Betty Tompkins made a name for herself creating a taxonomy of intimate anatomy. In her *Cunt Painting #20* (2013), she provides her own monochrome version of Courbet's *The Origin of the World*, evoking clouds with soft brushwork and shading. *Cunt Landscape* (1969), a tiny drawing in

colored pencil, suggests masturbation, with little strokes forming a bright-red clitoris burrowing beneath a blue sky. It was almost a relief to find Ed Ruscha's take on this subject: his *Pussy* (1966) is a graphite drawing of the word hovering alone against a stark-gray background.

Lucien Smith, on the other hand, addressed the subject of sunsets with his witty postcards of beach scenes featuring dialogue written across bucolic skies. In *Trapped on vacation* (2013), he inserts "We should of never came on this trip" and "I am so bored of you" against a golden setting sun. His *Untitled (Panoramic Postcards I and II)*, 2013, strings together a wall-length row of postcards, moving from sunset to moonrise in various tourist locations around the globe.

But the star of this show was Piotr Uklanski, whose collages of pink paper, torn to shreds and irregular shapes, took on a life of their own. It is tempting to critique these works as violent and misogynistic, since Uklanski is tearing at the paper, whose colors and shapes suggest the female form. But his results are quite touching and tender, capturing the innocence of a child's kindergarten project.

—Barbara Pollack



Piotr Uklanski, *Untitled (TBD1)*, 2013, paper collage, torn and pasted on plywood, 16 1/4" x 12 3/4". Marianne Boesky.



## Hank Willis Thomas

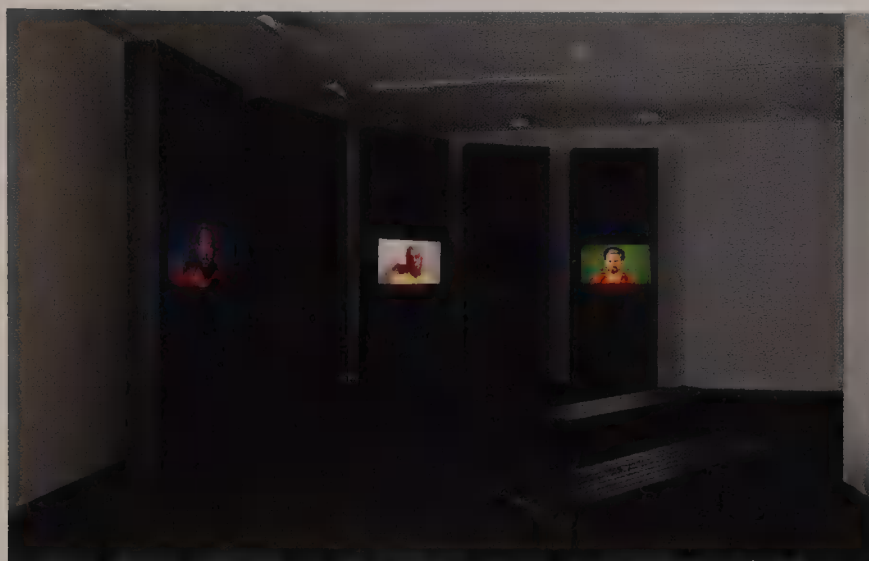
Jack Shainman

It seems downright wrong to describe Hank Willis Thomas as an African American artist, since he has often worked so hard to show that this dual identity only reflects a double consciousness—a looking at oneself through the critical eyes of another, coined by W. E. B. DuBois. In this exhibition, several works explored this idea, and there was a major video installation that allowed its subjects—African American males—to speak out for themselves.

In *Zero Hour* (2012), from a series on the cover of our 110th anniversary issue last November, Thomas photographed fellow artist Sanford Biggers wearing a top hat and tuxedo. The image is precisely bifurcated—black on one side, white face and white suit on the other. Digitally printed on Lumisty film, the six-paneled piece morphs and blurs as viewers walk from side to side, creating an ever more ambiguous sensation. A recent work, *Buckeye* (2013), is a framed quilt made of college football jerseys, a more subtle examination of disparity and diversity in America.

But the focus of this exhibition was the video installation *Question Bridge: Black Males* (ongoing from 2012) a five-channel work that examines the state of being an African American man at this point in history, created by Thomas with Chris Johnson, Bayeté Ross Smith, and Kamal Sinclair. For this work, the artists interviewed 150 subjects on questions such as, “When do you become a man?” and “Why are African American men afraid of seeming smart at school?” Their answers, delivered as headshots, are then woven together as a kind of stream of consciousness that also serves the process of instigating consciousness-raising in that very community. *Question Bridge* is being shown at a wide variety of schools and institutions this year, and more participants can weigh in on the project’s website.

It is not clear whether *Question Bridge* goes much deeper than a PBS special on



Hank Willis Thomas, Chris Johnson, Bayeté Ross Smith, and Kamal Sinclair, *Question Bridge: Black Males*, 2012, five-channel video, 2 hours, 53 minutes. Jack Shainman.

race, though. Many of the answers were not surprising at all and several were quite pedantic. But as a project that gives voice to members of a community, still most often depicted as victims or perpetrators of crime, it is highly commendable and often poignant.

—Barbara Pollack

## Sven-Ole Frahm

Galerie Richard

This exhibition, titled “A Hole in the Wall is Nothing to Worry About,” marked Sven-Ole Frahm’s first solo show in the United States, and featured canvases that had been alternatively slit open or stretched-out into protrusions. The show’s title, like the works, hinted at a self-deprecating humor inherent in the art—the works are indeed filled with “holes.” But perhaps the joke is on us, as the seemingly beat-up canvases give us something enticing to look at.

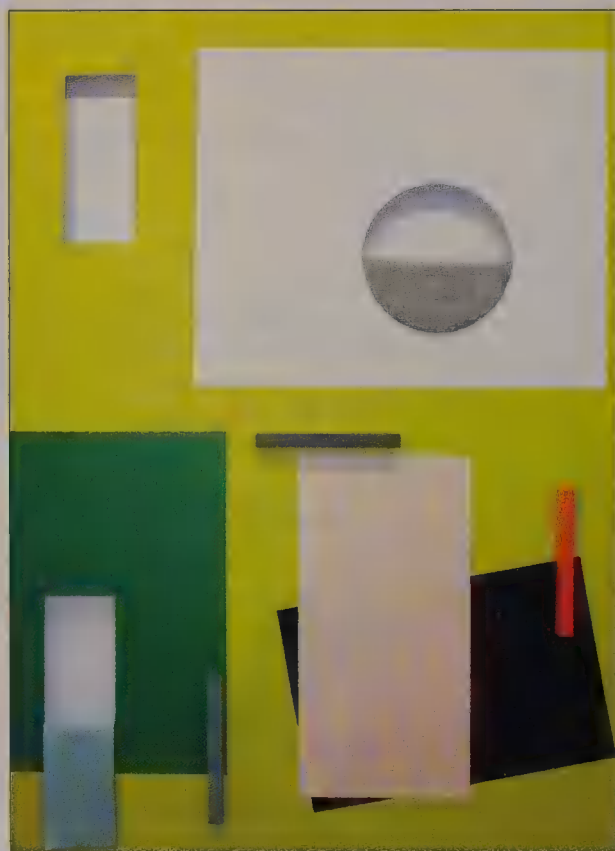
For example, in *Untitled* (#124), 2011, a thickly painted pink flap hangs off the canvas like a wagging tongue, lashing out tauntingly at the overlapping fabric and canvas on the opposite side of the frame. All of this takes place against a searing red-orange background, so bright as to appear toxic. A piece like *Untitled* (#125), 2011, almost seems to mock technology with its combinations of clinical whites, blues, and

greens as if it were establishing a digital code.

Frahm sometimes uses stitching—sewing directly into the canvas, like drawing, or to patch together disparate elements. Several works were manipulated to burst out into three dimensions. Up close, they appear prickly and aggressive, while from a distance, they become softer and more gemlike with their panels and facets. But the paintings in the show that achieved the greatest effect were those done in shades of white, allowing the artist’s

processes and results to be examined when the works were stripped of multiple elements and colors. Particularly appealing was *Untitled* (#152), 2012, rendered in two shades of white, the cutting and pasting seems more dramatic in a muted palette. The exposed wall behind the canvas appeared as a dark-gray rectangle, the slices of shadows behind the cutouts created a stark contrast, and the artist’s hand becomes more apparent even as overt signs of character fall away.

—Ali Pechman



Sven-Ole Frahm, *Untitled* (#155), 2012, acrylic on canvas, 73" x 53 1/2". Galerie Richard.



## 'Desire'

**Yancey Richardson**

This museum-worthy exhibition, curated by gallery artist Jodie Vicenta Jacobson, brought together works by 20 women demonstrating many approaches to the subject of desire—and happily, the images were all surprisingly free of stereotypes. Whereas male artists generally treat this subject in the form of naked women, the female artists in this exhibition went far past staring at men.

In fact, there were barely any images of men here. Instead, desire was most succinctly captured in works like Janice Guy's pair of hand-tinted black-and-white photographs from 1977, consisting of nude self-portraits of the not-yet-dealer holding a camera, upright and upside down, while her body is spread across a sofa for all to see. These images were the very opposite of Cindy Sherman's kind of self-portraits in which the woman looks off camera, perhaps toward something she finds desirable, instead of performing as an object of desire, as she often does in her "Untitled Film Stills" series. Mickalene Thomas complicated matters further by presenting *Fran: Show Me Some Love* (2009), a collage of an African American woman full of life and begging for people to stare at her.

Other works were much more metaphoric and surreal. Ana Mendieta was included with a Super-8 film, *Alma Silueta en Fuego* (*Silveta de Cenizas*), 1975, showing her silhouette carved in the ground and burning in bright-red flames. *Do Not Abandon Me #1: A Million Ways to Cum* (2009–10), a collaboration between Louise Bourgeois and Tracey Emin, made up of watercolors with embroidery, features the bold profile of a headless male torso boasting a prominent erection while a tiny woman rests on his member. And Yoko Ono's *touch me* (edition), 2008, is a modest white canvas with a cross cut into its surface inviting a tactile response.

Newcomers Gabriele Beveridge, Ruby Sky Stiler, Vivienne Griffin, and Erica Baum revived deconstruction strategies of the 1970s with their collages and wall



Janice Guy, *Untitled*, 1977, hand-tinted vintage black-and-white photograph, 35" x 52". Yancey Richardson.

installations. It seems that nearly 40 years after feminist critics wrote about "reversing the gaze," female artists are still finding new ways to approach this ever-fascinating subject.

—Barbara Pollack

## Lawrence Campbell

**Blue Mountain**

Lawrence Campbell (1914–98) was a painter as well as a scholar, educator, and critic who, in 1949, became a frequent contributor and associate editor at *ARTnews*. This exhibition, organized by the artist's daughter, Sarahjeane Campbell, presented 35 works in oil and watercolor created from the early 1950s through 1974. Campbell was an erudite experimenter who favored landscapes, in particular, impressionistic views of colorful, verdant locales, such as those in Southern France and Vermont. And he also celebrated urban parks, mostly in New York City.

Though figures and buildings did play parts in several paintings here, the

entire exhibition was so rich with foliage and nature that it could be seen as an homage to the form of the tree. Verticals of trunks, whether in orange and blue or flecked with purple and brown, drew the eye upward to blooming groups of daubs and dots in every imaginable hue—the leafy expanses often appeared to explode like fireworks. The artist's light, staccato, and almost musical way of handling paint—whether hashes or dots—made each tableau rich with movement. In *Morningside Park*

(1953), for example, a green, faceless man moves along a sidewalk, his vaguely dejected stance creating meaningful discord with the "happy" trees bearing windblown leaves composed of tiny, thick brushstrokes.

Campbell was clearly influenced by the masters, including Bonnard and Cézanne, but even more by Seurat, whose Pointillist style pervaded this lively exhibition. *Figures in a Park* (ca. 1950s), the largest painting in the show, depicts figures in a landscape, some in sharp profile, seated under a yellow sky. The scene exuded the characteristic warmth of all the images here.

—Doug McClellmont



Lawrence Campbell, *Morningside Park*, 1953, oil on canvas, 23" x 23". Blue Mountain.



## Lucas Samaras

Craig F. Starr

Eighteen pastel works by Lucas Samaras, all but one from a group of 100 he made in 1974, animated this sumptuous exhibition. The 13-by-10-inch pieces, drawn on black paper with Samaras's signature psychedelic palette of pastel shades set



Lucas Samaras, *Untitled, October 27, 1974*, pastel on paper, 13" x 10". Craig F. Starr.

against deep blues, could be roughly divided into three groups: seascapes featuring undulating waves under dark atmospheric skies; still lifes of flowers in vases accompanied by claustrophobic geometric shapes; and heavily patterned interiors, some with windows looking out onto the sea. Hanging on gray walls in the gallery's dim light, the drawings shone balefully, anchored by a riveting 1981 self-portrait of the bearded artist, staring out with the oversize eyes of a Byzantine saint.

Samaras worked rapidly on up to six of these drawings at once, sometimes blending colors with his fingers. For the artist, as Daniel S. Palmer explains in the catalogue, the images "represent the inside of his head, with windows for eyes." Many contain hidden representations of human figures engulfed by stippled pastel marks. *Untitled, August 17, 1974*, for example, is an exceedingly flattened representation of the corner of a room. Each wall contains an intertwined couple discernable only by the tiny eyes and mouths that are cursorily indicated over their smudged dark faces.

A similar figure is camouflaged beneath the dappled surface of every seascape, each seemingly floundering under the water. In the still lifes, spindly flowers in narrow vases are nearly overpowered by the aggressive patterns behind them.

The show was rounded out by three menacing box constructions, all variously bristling with tiny glittering pebbles, metal pins and knives, and even a sharp hypodermic needle. The sculptures added a welcome reminder of the luxurious danger inhabiting Samaras's fascinating early work.

—Elisabeth Kley

## Richard Pettibone

David Nolan

As you read this magazine, you are replicating the way Richard Pettibone experienced much contemporary art early in his career. When he began painting, he consciously reproduced work by other artists in the size in which he'd first seen it—as illustrations for reviews. This relationship governed much of the work in this marvelous show, which redefined two ideas: originality and the relationship between artists and their immediate tradition.

We might imagine the 31-year-old Pettibone in 1969 composing Duchamp "Pliant de Voyage. 1917"; Warhol, Andy "Jackie, 1964" (twelve times); and Stella, Frank "Hampton Roads", 1961. First, Pettibone had, either in a book, a magazine, or in his mind's eye, a Duchamp readymade—a vinyl typewriter cover taken out of context and transformed into an esthetic object. He combined that with Warhol's grieving Jackie Kennedy (JFK was assassinated in 1963) and Stella's geometric abstraction. These three works have nothing in common except for Pettibone, who removes them from their original context and synthesizes them in a small 7-by-28¾-inch object.

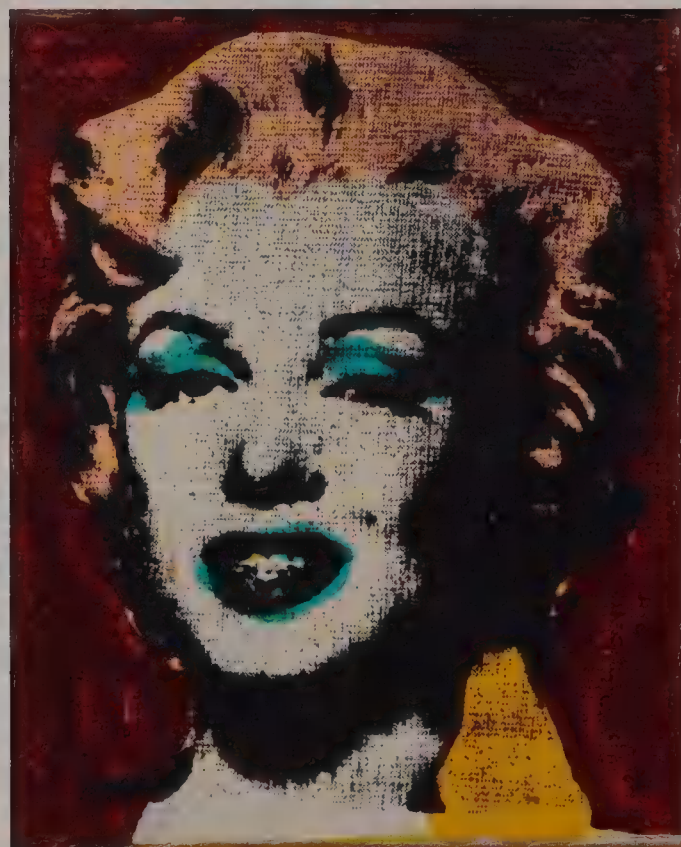
This is a translation: the three originals have their own roots and meanings, but here they become

something new and strange. History and chronology mean nothing to the artist, and by listing Warhol's painting (1964) before Stella's (1961), Pettibone confirms the idea that artistic meaning resides exclusively in the eye of the beholder.

Remarkably different is "Untitled (Train ran over tube of paint, Oct. 25, 1963)" from 1964. In this work, Pettibone documents his own presence by translating into art a boy's prank, putting something (usually a penny) on the railroad track and recovering the results. The smashed paint tube ceases to be the source of art and becomes itself art. Again, this is only the case because Pettibone intervenes in a situation and makes that intervention into art.

A few names echoed throughout the show: Duchamp, Johns, Warhol, and Lichtenstein. Especially interesting were Andy Warhol "Marilyn Monroe (brown) 1962." Signed by Andy Warhol (1973) and Roy Lichtenstein "Hopeless. 1963." (Signed by Roy Lichtenstein), 1969; Warhol and Lichtenstein signed Pettibone's reworking of their originals, thus literally endorsing his appropriation. This was Pettibone at his best, a wonderful example of the artist as reader of art.

—Alfred Mac Adam



Richard Pettibone, *Andy Warhol "Marilyn Monroe (brown) 1962."* Signed by Andy Warhol, 1973, acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, 2½" x 1½". David Nolan.



## Ryan Mosley

Tierney Gardarin

Some motifs recur in Ryan Mosley's paintings: beards, afros, skulls, stages, prickly pear cacti, triangles. These seemingly disparate things are assembled into rambunctious scenes that recall paranormal rituals and historic paintings from



Ryan Mosley, *Delta House Blues*, 2012, oil on linen, 90½" x 78¾". Tierney Gardarin.

the 1800s. And yet the five large works in this show looked completely new, owing to this English painter's use of odd techniques and esoteric narratives.

Across the board—or, rather, across the canvases—washy watercolors collided with opaque oil paints. This textural contrast was especially dramatic in *Botanical Theatre* (2013), in which an orange-colored seated man and a pink-colored belle performing onstage look as if they've stepped out of a Toulouse-Lautrec poster; behind them, stand sinister men in dark suits and stovepipe hats, who might well have inhabited one of Manet's blackest oil paintings. Everywhere, there are prickly pear cacti in plastic hues—expressive figures in their own right, even though they've evolved into abstracted paisley forms.

The skull, too, often appears in Mosley's works, serving as a memento mori, but also as a vital element in his visual vocabulary, which includes pyramids among other symbols that allude to the occult. Mosley could be citing theosophy,

alchemy, Rosicrucianism, or freemasonry. Or he has simply made up his own hermetic system.

In both *Delta House Blues* (2012) and *Thoughts of Man* (2013), skulls appear as ghastly, though charming, characters (with big hairdos) in the main narratives, and as huge, semi-architectural forms hidden in the backgrounds. Portholes and afros can double as eye sockets for these camouflaged craniums, and patterned shirts worn by heavily whiskered men correspond to nose holes. Whatever spirits Mosley may be conjuring, he is definitely a bold visionary unafraid to probe the dark mysteries that linger in our world—or in parallel worlds.

—Trent Morse

## Francis Upritchard

Anton Kern

This arresting show of ambiguously posed manikins and faux pottery was best seen back to front. It was in the smaller, rear space of the gallery

where Francis Upritchard (who represented New Zealand at the 2009 Venice Biennale) showed the full power of her compressed artistic energy.

In *A Beat* (2013), a defiantly posed humanoid figure of no specific gender faced the viewer; its sullen face painted Native American-style with blue, green, pink, and orange triangles on its forehead, cheeks, and chin. A painted body (face and hands) whose markings might mean something in another culture, could only signify an esthetic intention in this context: the human body comes into nature unmarked, but culture defines itself against nature by transforming it into a civilized person. This idea was enhanced by the vases and tankards made of painted modeling material that were arrayed along

the room's surrounding walls.

In the main gallery space, Upritchard assembled eight figures (all between 70 and 80 inches high, including the pedestals, which are themselves essential parts of the ensemble). Titles like *White Knight*, *Lunge*, *Sneaky*, or *Archer* (all 2012), merely rendered the manikins more uncertain: "archer" has no bow, "sneaky" is wearing a beautifully knit wool chain-mail vest, "white knight" bears no resemblance to the Lewis Carroll character, and "lunge" isn't lunging. The figures all, nevertheless, constitute attitudes—that is, poses—reminding us again of the artificiality of culture, the fact that art differentiates humans from the rest of creation.

So what might appear to be whimsy is nothing of the sort. Upritchard simultaneously pays homage to the origins of human artistic expression and captures that idea in figures not-quite human but human enough, to show that we dwell on a mysterious borderland. We live in nature, but we are not of nature. Our world, like that of Upritchard's figures, is what we create.

—Alfred Mac Adam



Francis Upritchard, *White Knight*, 2012, modeling material, wire, fabric, leather, and shell buttons, 70¼" x 23¾" x 15". Anton Kern.



## Max Weber

**Baltimore Museum of Art  
Baltimore**

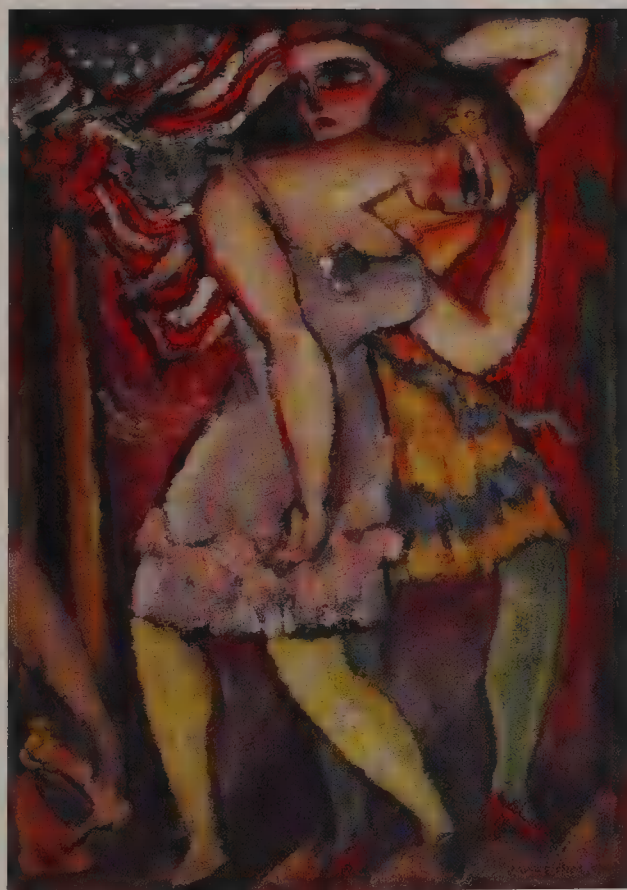
Subtitled "Bringing Paris to New York," this exhibition focused on the influences that Russian-born artist Max Weber (1881–1961) picked up in Paris from 1905 to 1909. Featuring more than 30 of his paintings and works on paper, as well as pieces by the French modernists who affected him, the show presented the stylistically adventurous Weber as one of the first to introduce this country to the turn-of-the-century European avant-garde.

The predominant greens and pinks in *The Apollo in Matisse's Studio* (1908), which Weber made while studying under Matisse, demonstrate the pupil's eager embrace of his teacher's revolutionary color theories. Returning to New York, fired up with enthusiasm for Matisse's use of pigment, Picasso's early Cubism, and Cézanne's spatial ambiguity, Weber set out to revolutionize American art. For the first time, this show brought together Matisse's sinewy, voluptuous *Blue Nude* (1907), which scandalized visitors to the 1913 Armory Show, and Weber's direct response to that work, *Figure Study*, from

1911. A provocatively posed form similar to the one in *Blue Nude* also figures in Weber's small 1909 oil *The Bathers*, whose brazen nudes and rugged sensuality call to mind both Matisse and Cézanne's paintings of the same subject.

Although these works were derided by critics, Weber persevered, convinced his modernist approach reflected the spirit of the times. *Interior of the Fourth Dimension* (1913), an expressively fragmented urban abstraction, suggests both the towering skyline of Manhattan and the dynamism of Gotham. Another slice of city life, *Burlesque #2 (Vaudeville)*, 1909, with its colorful, contorted dancers interlocked on stage, epitomizes the Cubist distortions of Weber's radically new style. The influences of his Paris years continued to infuse his later works, with subjects ranging from the Great Depression to the fate of European Jews in World War II. This splendid exhibition reaffirmed Weber's standing as one of the most important American artists of the 20th century.

—Stephen May

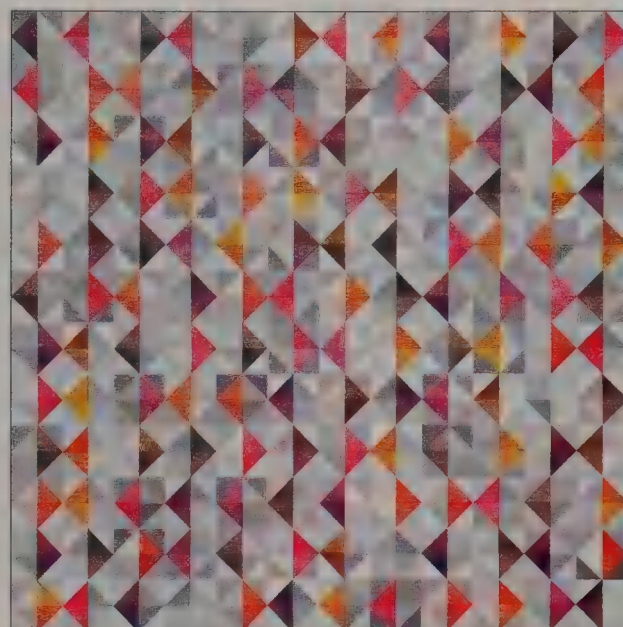


Max Weber, *Burlesque #2 (Vaudeville)*, 1909, oil on canvas, 20½" x 14½". Baltimore Museum of Art.

## Biggs & Collings

**Fort Worth Contemporary Arts  
Fort Worth**

British mosaicist Emma Biggs founded the Mosaic Workshop in 1987. Her husband, artist and writer Matthew Collings, has produced several books and BBC documentaries on contemporary art. When they work together as Biggs & Collings to make oil-on-canvas paintings—usually rectilinear grids filled with shimmering patterns of triangles—Biggs determines the colors and composition, and Collings executes them. This show, titled "Suspicious Utopias," included two characteristic examples of those works, as well as a large text piece extending across two walls of the gallery.



Biggs & Collings, *807 Years*, 2013, oil on canvas, 60" x 60". Fort Worth Contemporary Arts.

*The Greater Light* (2012) and *807 Years* (2013), hung on one wall of the exhibition space, present occasional highlights of salmon, orange, and cobalt that leap forward from the blue-gray tones receding into the background. Described by the artists as "landscape paintings without the landscape," the works have regular patterns that suggest textiles as much as mosaics, and their titles allude to passages in the book of Genesis, tying these works to visual traditions that go back millennia before modernism and postmodernism.

Covering two other walls of the gallery was *Our Paintings* (2013), a vinyl text piece. Here, a hostile 2002 review by British artist Merlin Carpenter of Collings's book *Art Crazy Nation* was reprinted, with certain passages crossed out—and Collings's answers to those criticisms printed alongside. The responses were color-coded to rebut specific accusations; explain Biggs & Collings's worldview; and offer social, political, and esthetic explanations of their paintings. In a nutshell, the duo used their response to Carpenter—an artist who often produces text-based institutional critiques—to argue the fundamental importance of visual form.

Reading the dialogue between artist and critic was more enlightening than reading either side on its own. Ultimately, the monumental scale of the installation satirized the squabbling over minor details that often goes on between writer or artist, and critic.

—Benjamin Lima



## Koen Vanmechelen

CONNERSMITH

Washington, D.C.

Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen's vast Cosmopolitan Chicken Project (CCP), which he began in 1999, is an art-meets-science conceptual work that includes photography, installation, drawing, and sculpture—not to mention the thousands of chickens he has been breeding on farms all over the world. This exhibition, titled "Leaving Paradise," offered only a brief introduction to the project.

The centerpiece of the show was a cage containing a couple of live Red Junglefowl, near-extinct Southeast Asian birds that are likely the closest living links to the first chickens domesticated by humans more than 5,000 years ago. For Vanmechelen, the Junglefowl represent the strength and beauty of evolution by natural selection, unmediated by human meddling. Within the confines of the tall, well-appointed chicken-wire cage, they were ceaselessly active: flying, strutting, and even procreating.

If these wild chickens represent a kind of Edenic perfection, the many pedigreed (and inbred) chickens of the world, for Vanmechelen, are fowl after the Fall. His CCP crossbreeds highly prized domesticated birds, aiming ultimately to create new, superior "international" chickens with restored vitality and diversity. One wall here featured mugshot-like photographs of 17 generations of Vanmechelen's often flamboyantly beautiful birds. Since many of his chickens travel for exhibitions and breeding, the artist has also produced for them amusing faux passports, displayed in a giant grid. Though these creatures do not end up on the dining table, they do, after an apparently pleasant life and natural death, wind up on sculpture stands via taxidermy.

By fitting the fowl with passports, headshots, and



Jamie Baldrige, *The Starvation of Czar Nicholas*, 2010, archival pigment print, 40½" x 55½". Modernbook.

other humanizing elements, Vanmechelen suggests that a chicken's life is a metaphor for human existence. The unavoidable upshot is that civilization somehow produces weaker human beings—a return-to-nature notion linked to disagreeable ideas about lost racial purity. But, to borrow from Hobbes: life in nature is nasty, brutish, and short—and only an advanced and sophisticated culture offers us the possibility of esthetic, rather than culinary, delectation of these gorgeous birds.

—Rex Weil

### UP NOW

## Jamie Baldrige

Modernbook

San Francisco

Through November 2

Taking inspiration from Surrealism and fairy tales, photographer Jamie Baldrige depicts women in disturbing scenarios—birthing antique radios, opening their legs

to locomotives, wearing birdcages over their heads—against digitally constructed backdrops of crumbling Victorian interiors. To accompany the eleven large-scale photographs in this compelling show, titled "Almost Fiction," Baldrige composed snippets of narrative that hint at the dramas unfolding in the pictures. Filled with references to virgins, unwise marriages, and carnal sin, the wall texts describe women undergoing obscure punishments or bizarre acts of God.

In *Hydrocephalus* (2008), for instance, a

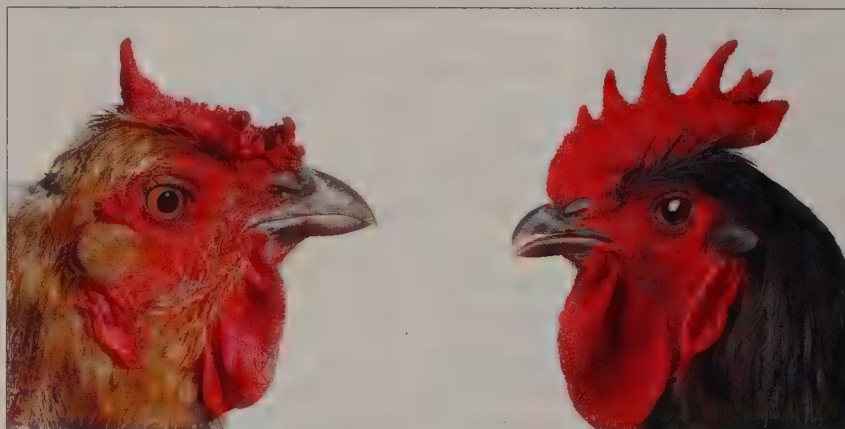
woman in a white dress sits in profile, as if for a portrait. On her head, Baldrige has superimposed a vitrine filled with water, which submerges her nose and mouth. The text describes this torture by drowning as a cure for "ritualistic onychophagia" (nail biting) and "wanton self-abuse"—a pointed reference to 19th-century doctors' misguided hysteria treatments.

Compared with the critical bite of *Hydrocephalus*, many of Baldrige's images invite the viewer to exult in the distresses of his damsels. He offers them up in delectable states of vulnerability, bosoms stuffed into lacy white dresses, eyes wide and dollish, or nipples and pubic hair visible through a soaked nightie, as in the flood scene of *Into the New World* (2011).

What rescues these photos from the realm of torted-up Victorian fantasy is Baldrige's production style. The artist edits studio shots of his models into rooms he builds with film-animation

software, lending his prints the lurid sheen of a glossy fashion editorial or film still. The combination of these slick, digitally rendered surfaces with the models' contemporary looks—all blowouts and bangs and salon-perfect eyebrows—pushes the pictures beyond carefully constructed curiosities and gives them the feel of modern fables.

—Lamar Anderson



Koen Vanmechelen, *Mechelse Redcap X Jersey Giant*, 2013, Lambda print on Plexiglas, diptych, 12" x 12" each. CONNERSMITH.



## Francisco Zúñiga

Jack Rutberg Fine Arts  
Los Angeles

This impressive exhibition was a centennial tribute to the Costa Rican-born Mexican artist Francisco Zúñiga (1912–98). Featuring 50 sculptures, drawings, and paintings spanning five decades, it emphasized Zúñiga's fascination with both the sensual aspects of the female form and its architectonic, elemental qualities.

Most intriguing were a few early works from the 1930s. Recently rediscovered, the two-foot-tall stone sculpture *Cabeza de Indio* (Head of an Indian) from 1932 is as stolid as an Olmec head yet startlingly modern. By contrast, *Chola* (1934), a charming oil portrait of a girl, captures the freshness and uncertainty of youth. The three women in the 1939 painting *Mujeres* (Women) sit quietly in a desert landscape; they are as brown and rooted as the hills in the distance.

As his style matured, Zúñiga focused on sculpture, exploring the curves and heft of flesh in sinuous nudes, as well as the dignity and strength of women sheathed in voluminous folds of fabric. While his depictions of both naked and clothed figures are equally accomplished, it is the mysterious, cloaked women who fascinate. The artist often portrayed them in pairs or groups, evoking the fundamental bonds of companionship, family, and community. In *Grupo de Cuatro Figuras con Niño* (Group of Four Figures with Child), from 1960, the women stand so close together that they appear to form a single, formidable mass. Similarly, the 1970 bronze *Mujer de Pie* (Standing Woman) depicts a buxom character whose pose—arms crossed, hip tilted—projects pure confidence.

—Sharon Mizota



Francisco Zúñiga, *Grupo de Cuatro Figuras con Niño*, 1960, bronze, 7½" x 7½" x 4¼".  
Jack Rutberg Fine Arts.

## Deb Sokolow

Western Exhibitions  
Chicago

In 2003, Chicago artist Deb Sokolow began exploring imagined conspiracy theories involving underworld entities through text-based collage. Generally featuring recurring characters, her tales



Deb Sokolow, *The Bodies in Mitchell's Cabin*, 2012–13, two inflatable mannequins, two black tablecloths, tape, 44" x 72" x 32". Western Exhibitions.

are always recounted by an unnamed narrator who addresses readers in the second person—thus implicating them in her wacky scenarios.

Sokolow's recent exhibition found you quitting your job as a security guard at the Art Institute of Chicago after receiving an invitation to an artists' residency in Norway. Upon arrival, you discover that your hosts are in fact part of a nefarious international art-theft organization known as The Association, and learn that they didn't recruit you for your artistic talent, but simply want to exploit your knowledge of the museum. As usual, Sokolow installed the show so that the details of her story didn't emerge immediately, but had to be pieced together in a fantastical sort of treasure hunt that was finally given context as part of a larger narrative.

In the first room, drawings referred to historical art thefts, a sculpture of a pair of bodies under black tablecloths hinted at murder, and a seemingly unconnected yet amusing artist's book chronicled *A Short History of Unconventional Ingredients Found in the Philly Cheesesteak Sandwich* (2013). The show's centerpiece, a 28-foot-long panoramic narrative titled *All Your Vulnerabilities Will Be Assessed* (2012–13) was featured in the gallery's second room—and here Sokolow linked the crimes and the cheesesteaks in a complex web of facts

and fictions that hinted at The Association's murderous schemes.

Presenting handwritten texts, photocopies, diagrams, grainy black-and-white photographs, and invented architectural floor plans, the piece appeared to bring everything together. But Sokolow left some words crossed out, blocked by paint, or half erased. Ultimately, the show explained what happened when you got to Norway—almost—and then concluded in a cliffhanger, leaving viewers with an uneasy sense that they'd come unhinged, and that truth is uncertain.

—Lauren Weinberg

## Jonathan Perlowsky

Morrison  
Kent, Connecticut

There is a softness to the hard edges of Jonathan Perlowsky's art. This show featured some older works on paper, canvas, and wood—most from the 1970s—and nine new paintings from 2012 and 2013. In the recent pieces, the Connecticut-based artist sprayed acrylic and tinted piano lacquer onto sheets of birchwood to produce subtle gradations of seemingly self-illuminated color.

In *Ophelia*, the results are light as a feather, with the wood's visible grain holding its own as a panel of equal interest and value to the painted stripes. That equanimity of paint and wood grain was carried through four large diptychs on birch, all from 2013. In these works, Perlowsky applied pigment to only one of the two panels, leaving the second panel as pure wood that offered a textural, organic foil to the vibrant colors on the other side. He also achieved a surprising level of luminescence by mixing the pigments with metallic powder from the turn of the 20th century that he discovered in a warehouse some 40 years ago. In *Ghosts and Divinity*, flickers of light emanate from within the paint. And the slashes of orange and gold in *Valentine's Day* coalesce like lava dripping over a flame.

In *The Cimmerian Legend of Baby Blue*, Perlowsky applied some of the painted lines with a triple-zero brush; the result is extremely subtle and delicate, as though the lives "dissipate practically into nothingness," in the words of the





Jonathan Perlowsky, *The Cimmerian Legend of Baby Blue*, 2013, lacquer on birch, 80" x 48". Morrison.

artist. In all of his work, the tension between random gestural forms and studied, meticulous lines creates a dramatic dialogue between hard-edge and free-form. Indeed, the artist has said in an interview that he prefers to "guide the color into the spaces it wants to go with drips that are both controlled and surprising."

—Tonia Shoumatoff

## Ariel Freiberg

Miller Yezerski  
Boston

Unlikely objects overlap and collide in Ariel Freiberg's lush oil paintings on panel and linen. Of the seven works on view in "Blazoning Arms" at the newly merged Miller Yezerski Gallery, four were oils on linen, all two-feet square, offering startling portraits of stiletto heels juxtaposed with gardening tools. At first glance, sharp edges appear to dominate these shoe works, which Freiberg considers riffs on heraldry. Depicted lying on their sides—one pair to a painting—with spiky heels either meeting at the center or thrusting outward toward the work's edges, the shoes are visually bisected by such implements as a trowel or a cultivating fork.

If the themes of gardening and fashion suggest a gentle, feminine universe,

these charged compositions challenge that notion. The artist wields her paints with the skill of a gardener handling tools, setting these pointy objects against backgrounds of soft zigzags or sunset-like streaks. The shoes demonstrate her painterly abilities—from the bronze sheen of the pumps in *Shake Fork* (2012) to the palette-like dappling of the red pair in *Blazoning Arms* (2013).

Another sort of tension emerges in the three smaller pieces on panel, which present collages of illusionistic faces and body parts, interspersed with seeming tears in wallpaper or patterned fabric. Within these abstract arrangements—which evoke layers of tattered posters



Ariel Freiberg, *Shake Fork*, 2012, oil on linen, 24" x 24". Miller Yezerski.

on a wall—a cheek, an eyebrow, or another feature flickers into view, only to recede into the play of color and form. In *In Praise of Surfaces* (2013), slices of fleshy pink intermingle with noirish bits of mesh and shadows and strips in gaudy lipstick shades. Despite partial glimpses of a nose and eye, the painting revels in what remains unknown. Throughout this show, Freiberg's surfaces do not tell the whole story, instead challenging the viewer to dig deeper.

—Joanne Silver

## Barbara Sternberger

Elizabeth Leach  
Portland, Oregon

In the spring of 2012, feeling curtailed by the constant need to reload her brush with pigment, Washington artist Barbara Sternberger improvised a solution. She packed dry pigments and a

liquid wax binder into a snow-cone cup. Once the mixture hardened, she removed the cup and painted with the remaining mass, increasing the endurance of her gestures. For the 2012–13 abstract and semi-abstract oil paintings in this show, titled "Confluence," Sternberger coupled this approach with traditional brushwork. The results were dramatic—broad, luxuriant smears against quick slashes and jots, offering a balance between serenity and nervous energy.

In some works, lines and shapes congeal into recognizable objects—a woman's shoe in *Amble*, a mason jar in *Mason*, and a champagne cork popping in *Release*. But the strongest compositions are those with ambiguous forms that lend themselves to the viewer's imagination and projection. In *Segue Blue* and *Sojourn*, kernels of form float atop a nuanced background, the shapes relating in dynamic spatial dialogue. The artist set up two earth-toned masses in horizontal opposition to one another in *Make Believe*. The passageway of negative space between them recalls the almost-touching-but-not-quite fingers of God and Adam in Michelangelo's iconic *Creation of Adam*.

Though Sternberger used her signature palette of periwinkle and gunmetal blues for the paintings in this show, they were less architectonically structured, and more buoyant and ethereal, than her past works—perhaps owing to the greater freedom afforded by the artist's new technique. Her intuitive deployment of gesture to stoke emotional resonance in the viewer places her squarely within the ongoing lineage of Abstract Expressionists and Color Field painters.

—Richard Speer



Barbara Sternberger, *Mason*, 2013, oil on canvas, 20" x 20". Elizabeth Leach.



## Ibrahim El-Salahi

**Tate Modern  
London**

This retrospective, the first for an African artist at the Tate Modern, chronicled the work of Ibrahim El-Salahi, a pioneering figure in the rise of African modernism during the postcolonial 1960s. Born in Sudan in 1930, the artist has had an enduring and prolific career. This show, organized by the Museum for African Art in New York, placed his early, best work at the forefront of the modernist art movement that briefly held sway in his native country.

Uniting more than 100 pieces—mostly oil paintings—that spanned five decades, the show included a small selection of El-Salahi's realistic, academic oil portraits from the early 1950s. He soon developed a freer, more distinctive artistic language, as exemplified by the gaunt, big-eyed canvas *Self-Portrait of Suffering* (1961) and the brilliant *Vision of the Tomb* (1965). In *Vision*, the artist fused abstract forms with Islamic motifs such as Arabic calligraphy and the crescent moon—a recurring combination in his work.

Throughout his career, El-Salahi strove to marry traditional Islamic elements with an Abstract Expressionist style that sometimes suggests Arshile Gorky or Roberto Matta. In his bold, formal experimentation, he occupies a hybrid space between Western and Islamic, African and European, abstraction and figuration. These elements come together most strikingly in *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams I* (1961–5), a tightly composed study of semi-abstracted figures and crescents.

In the early 1970s, El-Salahi took a post as deputy undersecretary of culture in Sudan, but he quickly fell afoul of the military authorities. He was accused of antigovernment activities and jailed without trial in 1975–6, a deeply traumatizing experience. Since then, he has lived in exile in Qatar, the United States, and England, and his recent work has lost much of its abstract quality. *The Day of Judgement* (2008–9), for example, is a hellish, Boschian vision of naked crowds and grasping arms, suggesting a pessimistic turn in outlook. From modernism to dystopia, and from



Ibrahim El-Salahi, *Vision of the Tomb*, 1965, oil on canvas, 36" x 36". Tate Modern.

artistic invention to prison and exile, it has been a long and difficult journey for El-Salahi. But his work—and especially his early experimentations—suggests the pioneering possibilities for postcolonial Africa.

—Roger Atwood

## Ed Ruscha

**Kunstmuseum Basel  
Basel, Switzerland**

Quintessential Los Angeles artist Ed Ruscha's fascination with that city's apartment buildings began with his 1965 book of black-and-white photographs, *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, which inspired a suite of sketches that finally resulted in ten finished drawings. This exhibition, titled after the series, brought together 60 related works, including nine of the completed drawings and nine preparatory sketches, in addition to the photographs that started it all, photo books, and a handful of the artist's logo and sign paintings.

Ruscha is celebrated for transforming urban commentary into an art form, and



Ed Ruscha, *Wilshire Boulevard*, 1965, graphite and charcoal on paper, 14 1/2" x 22 5/8". Kunstmuseum Basel.

the juxtaposition of photos and studies of the same buildings provided insights into his process. While the photographs appeared as spontaneous snapshots—power lines, telephone poles, parked cars, and all—the drawings had a carefully thought-out, idealized quality. In *Doheny Drive* (1965), the artist eliminated the building's shading and architectural details to produce a flattened study of vertical and horizontal planes that approaches abstraction. Only the three palm trees in the lower corner provide a hint of photographic realism, although they have the artificial quality of cutouts.

Though the apartment drawings and photographs were the focus of the show, it also included a broad sampling of related work, such as Ruscha's photo books, of which he produced 16 between 1963 and 1978. *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) is a monumental accordion foldout that measures almost 25 feet when opened.

Rounding out the exhibition was a selection of logo and sign paintings, some of which have attained iconic status. One of these was *Hollywood Study #8* (1968), a small mixed-media collage that preceded Ruscha's series about the Hollywood sign: a landmark as symbolic of Los Angeles as the apartment buildings he ennobled.

—Mary Krienke

## Charles Avery

**Galerie Perrotin  
Paris**

Back in 2004, the British artist Charles Avery invented a distant, fictional territory called The Island, which, like Jonathan Swift's Lilliput, exists only through his creations. These drawings, installations, and text have been shown sporadically in various exhibitions, and

together they comprise a kind of anthropological museum of the artist's "findings" about his imaginary world.

This show, titled "It Means It Means!," was described as a two-part exhibition. But one of its two venues, The Island's Museum of Art Onomatopoeia, was fictional—and the show there, curated by Tom Morton, featured real works by artists from Antoine Watteau to Jeff Koons. That said, it could only be experienced through a series of





Charles Avery, *Untitled (It Means It Means!; Gonzalez-Torres, Ray, Riley, Watteau)*, detail, 2013, pencil, ink, acrylic, and gouache on paper, mounted on linen, 29½" x 39½". Galerie Perrotin.

large-format drawings on paper that Avery presented in Paris, which depicted imaginary visitors perusing the historic artworks on display in the museum's galleries.

At times, Avery's quirky sketches seemed to channel skewed *New Yorker* cartoons, or, with their grim caricatures of angular and crotchety-looking figures, German Expressionist paintings. Studying them yielded entertaining, and even amusing, discoveries—recognizing a Louise Bourgeois sphinx, for example, or identifying a Vija Celmins seascape.

Ultimately, this show satirized the world of *The Island*, which Avery himself created, by exploring what art means when it travels to a faraway, foreign place and is seen out of context. Interchanging the ideas of real and fictional—by including real works of art in a fictional exhibition, and installing those exhibition drawings in a real art gallery in Paris—the artist posited the viewer in the role of anthropologist, observing the observers. The show's title, "It Means It Means!," suggests the slippery nature of reality, representation, and what it all might mean to Avery's imaginary population of Islanders. —**Laurie Hurwitz**

## Maria Lassnig

**Deichtorhallen Hamburg  
Hamburg, Germany**

Nonagenarian Austrian painter Maria Lassnig is among the major female protagonists of 20th-century art, though she was only appreciated late in her career. While Louise Bourgeois, the grande dame of surreal introspection, drew upon mysterious realms of personal experience, Lassnig has consistently explored the

depths of what she calls "body awareness"—a mediation of inner emotional states through the membrane of her physical being. She employs a range of unconventional methods to produce her often painfully intimate self-portraits, such as painting while lying on the floor, or sitting on the canvas and tracing her own bodily contours onto the surface.

Titled "The Location of Pictures," this loosely chronological retrospective featured 113 paintings created since 1945, and two experimental films

from the 1970s. In a series of large-format 1960s line drawings described as "body-sensation figurations," sensuously curved and fractured lines evoke the female form



Maria Lassnig, *Selbstporträt mit Stab*, 1971, oil on canvas, 76" x 51". Deichtorhallen Hamburg.

without being immediately recognizable as such. A few years later, Lassnig began experimenting with surreal, monstrous forms that merge human figures with animals; and in the '70s, her portraits took on an emotionally charged tenor. *Selbstporträt mit Stab* (Self-portrait with Rod), 1971, created in memory of her deceased mother and rendered in her signature palette of pale-bluish greens, presents Lassnig seated on a chair, holding a rod that pierces through her bare torso. Hovering behind her but barely visible against the green background is the

phantom form of a smiling older woman, hands resting on the artist's shoulders in support.

After Lassnig returned to Vienna in 1980—following more than a decade in New York—her subjects evolved into machinelike figurations. In *Harte und weiche Maschine* (Hard and Soft Machine) and *Küchenbraut* (Kitchen Bride), both from 1988, the figures' faces are obscured, contorted, or replaced by technoid apparatuses. More recent works from the '90s and 2000s feature semi-figurative, semi-abstract representations that seem fleshy, naked, and organic, like bodies turned inside out. These newer works open up the spectrum of "body awareness" to extend beyond the boundaries of the individual into the realm of the universal.

—**Belinda Grace Gardner**

## Shadi Habib Allah

**Green Art**

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

This exhibition by New York-based Palestinian artist Shadi Habib Allah was inspired by an incident in 2009, when, traveling from Tel Aviv to New York, he was stopped at Ben Gurion airport and questioned about a sculpture he was carrying—a cast of a leg he had made in Palestine. After he was subjected to much interrogation, the sculpture was taken from him and eventually destroyed without his permission or knowledge.

Titled "Evacuated Containers," the show was anchored by three large-scale graphite drawings that envision the high-security room in which Habib Allah's sculpture was destroyed, though he has never seen it. Instead, he contacted a security guard at the airport, and asked him to gain entrance to the room and then describe it to a police sketch artist.



Shadi Habib Allah, "Evacuated Containers," 2013, installation view with plastic bag and epoxy, dimensions variable. Green Art.



The artist made detailed images from the guard's recollections and oral testimony that were then redrawn by Habib Allah on a one-to-one scale. Exhibited on the gray-painted walls of the gallery, the drawings appeared to extend the space within the room like a ghostly apparition, and evoked the approximation of memory and perception.

In an accompanying video from 2013, *WOW*, two balloons float against a black screen while Habib Allah gives a detailed account of the airport incident in a voiceover narration. As he describes what happened and explains his encounters with security personnel, his story seems sketchy and unreliable. And it is, indeed, just as likely to contain error and bias as the account that the guard gave of the room, and just as subjective as the decision that led the airport staff member to categorize the sculpture as suspicious rather than benign. The irreconcilability of personal perceptions and experiences is suggested by the image of the balloons, floating at varying heights in the same black void.

—Stephanie Bailey

## 'Host & Guest'

Tel Aviv Museum of Art  
Tel Aviv

For this ambitious undertaking, which featured nine 2013 projects in the form of exhibitions and events, curator and former *ARTnews* editor Steven Henry Madoff invited international artists, curators, and theorists to explore the theme of Jacques Derrida's book *Of Hospitality*. Among topics examined by the works were the rights and obligations of hosts and guests and the underlying tensions between them. This was neatly embodied by *Exile*, in which Spanish artist and curator Dora Garcia asked six of her colleagues to send letters, cards, and objects to Suzanne Landau, director and chief curator of the museum. Landau alone had the authority to decide which items to display and which to discard, illustrating the power of the host.

"Dirty Realism," curated by Hou Hanru, brought together the work of Chinese artist Liu Xiaodong and three Israeli artists, all of which explored issues of co-existence and cultural misunderstanding. Xiaodong's paintings and drawings were created in Israel, but they relate to a previous series depicting the lives of jade



David Tartakover, *Baggage # 26*, 2010–12, mixed media on paper, 25½" x 34¼". Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

miners in a region where the Muslim Uyghur population is in conflict with the Chinese government. Nir Evron's video *In Virgin Land* (2006) deals with the possible inaccuracy of first impressions. A continuous and beautiful view of a barren landscape of mountains, swamps, and desert, presumably shot by a camera held completely still, was in fact a compilation of images Evron photographed all over Israel, and then digitally manipulated to form a single-tracking shot of one location. Deceptive, too, was the accompanying narration. Seeming to describe a six-day journey into an inhospitable terrain, the track was in fact compounded from the writings of ten European travelers, among them military men and rabbis, who visited the Holy Land between the 12th and 19th century.

Ultimately, "Host & Guest" was an experimental venture, one of its winning features being that it brought politics and social realities—subjects generally avoided by exhibitions here—into the artistic discourse.

—Angela Levine

## Jessica Stockholder

Barbara Edwards Contemporary  
Toronto

For this exhibition, Connecticut-based artist Jessica Stockholder took a break from her well-known installation work and presented a series of lively drawings and mixed-media collages, all from 2013. Her site-specific sculptures often feature layers of meticulously arranged colors and forms, but here Stockholder let loose, allowing shapes to float in seas of white space. Several pieces also incorporated handwritten text and hints

of figuration, bringing to mind the vibrant work of CoBrA artists Asger Jorn and Karel Appel.

Jostling triangles, diamonds, and scribbled loops recur in ten small drawings on paper, each roughly 11 by 14 inches. In *Body Part #1*, the points of two diamonds, one beige and the other orange and mauve, almost touch just above the centre of the page, barely tamping down the blotches of yellow, white, and blue underneath. In the top right, the rough outline of a figure, with startled-looking eyes and flying hair, flees from the barely controlled chaos. A head is suggested by *Body Part #3*, in which a large pink oval that recalls an ear abuts a blue rectangle of paint containing shapes that could be an eye and a mouth.

Larger mixed-media works display Stockholder's mastery of color and her skill at creating visual depth. *Fish* presents four piscine shapes, in various states of abstraction, arranged underneath, on top of, and around torn bits of magazine pages, as if ready to be wrapped by a Matissean fishmonger. Leafy shapes occupy the background of *Puzzled*, in which shades of green pencil crayon, and pieces of plastic combine with shots of blue, bright red, and soft peach to suggest an inviting tropical locale. Even in these formats, Stockholder's touch is as playful and inventive as ever.

—Bill Clarke



Jessica Stockholder, *Fish*, 2013, litho print, acrylic, collage, graphite, and colored pencil on paper, 29½" x 18". Barbara Edwards Contemporary.



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Marlo Pascual, *Untitled* 2013, digital C-print mounted on aluminum and wood stool, 39.75" x 42" x 19" / 101 x 106.7 x 48.3cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, NY. Photo: Jean Vong

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A black and white photograph of a muscular sculpture by Gordon Solie, displayed on a pedestal in a gallery setting.

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Kendall Martin Bahl (MFA 2013). Photo: Sara Condo (BFA 2009)





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Website: [www.kcad.edu](http://www.kcad.edu)

BFA: Art Education, Collaborative Design, Digital Media, Drawing, Fashion Studies, Furniture Design, Graphic Design, Illustration, Industrial Design, Interior Design, Medical Illustration, Metals/Jewelry Design, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture/Functional Art; Art History (BS); Master of Art Education (MAE); Master of Fine Arts (MFA) with concentrations in Drawing, Painting, Photography and Printmaking; and an MBA Certificate in Design and Innovation Management as part of Ferris State University's MBA program.

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Phone: 800.232.7242  
Fax: 312.629.6101  
E-mail: [admiss@saic.edu](mailto:admiss@saic.edu)  
Website: [www.saic.edu](http://www.saic.edu)

A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. For more information, please visit [saic.edu](http://saic.edu).

## WEST

### CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

1111 Eighth Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
Phone: 800.447.1ART  
Website: [www.cca.edu](http://www.cca.edu)  
Contact: Sheri McKenzie  
Vice president for enrollment management

California College of the Arts empowers students to make art that matters. The college is noted for its interdisciplinary approach and the breadth of its programs in art, architecture, design, and writing. Located in the San Francisco Bay Area, a global hub of innovation and creativity, CCA offers 22 undergraduate programs and 12 graduate programs, including interdisciplinary fine arts and social practice, curatorial practice, and visual studies. Degrees offered: BFA, BA, BArch, MFA, MA, MArch, MAAD, and MBA.



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Graduate Studies Department  
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Phone: 949.376.6000 extension 270  
Fax: 949.715.8085  
E-mail: [mfaadmissions@LCAD.edu](mailto:mfaadmissions@LCAD.edu)  
Website: [www.LCAD.edu](http://www.LCAD.edu)

Laguna College of Art + Design's MFA in Painting and Drawing is designed as an immersion in the history, theory and practice of representational art. Located with access to Los Angeles artists, galleries and museums, our MFA is a laboratory in which students can investigate contemporary subject matter within the pictorial tradition.

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50123 Florence, Italy  
Phone: 212.248.7225  
E-mail: [admissions@saci-florence.edu](mailto:admissions@saci-florence.edu)  
Website: [www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu)

Studio Art Centers International, a US-accredited program, specializes in studio art, art history, art conservation, design, and Italian studies. Courses offered in over 40 different Studio and Academic disciplines. Programs: Semester/Year Abroad, MFA, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate and Summer Studies.

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A vertical advertisement for Studio Art Centers International (SACI) in Florence, Italy. The background is a photograph of a person's head and shoulders, covered in colorful graffiti and text. The text 'MAKE ART IN ITALY AT SACI' is prominently displayed in large, bold, white letters. Below it is the website 'www.saci-florence.edu'. The SACI logo is at the top left. At the bottom, it lists programs: Two-Year MFA in Studio Art, Post Bac Year, Semester and Year-Long US Accredited Courses. The person in the background has words like 'FORM', 'COLOR', 'FEEL', 'LOVE', 'HOP', and 'DIRTY JOB' written on their face and body.



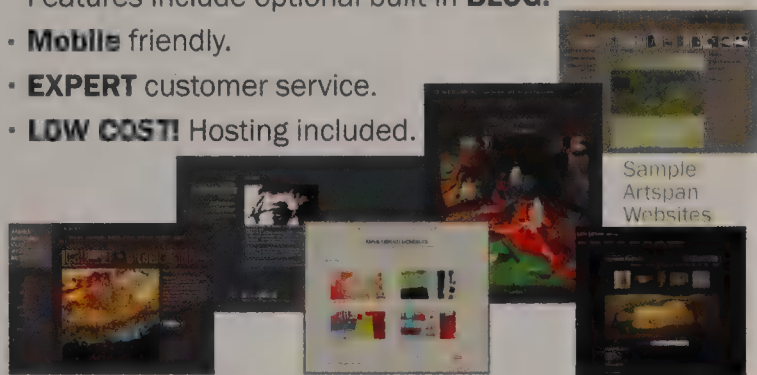
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Top: Watercolor on Paper, 1957  
Bottom: Floating in a Landscape, Lithograph

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## Exhibition / Competition

**Agora Gallery.** Established in 1984, Agora Gallery located in the heart of New York City's Chelsea art district is currently accepting new submissions for the 2013/2014 Exhibition Season. Open to emerging as well as established artists worldwide, 18 years of age or older. Check out work by currently featured artists on <http://www.art-mine.com>. The Gallery Director reviews submissions on an ongoing basis. For more information about gallery representation visit: <http://www.agora-gallery.com/representation> or email: [Marie@agora-gallery.com](mailto:Marie@agora-gallery.com).

**2014 20"x 20"x 20": A National Compact Competition** at LSU in Baton Rouge, LA. Open to all artists in U.S. All media. \$35 entry fee for three entries. \$6000 in cash awards. Juror: Shana Barefoot, Collections and Exhibitions Manager at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia in Atlanta, GA. Deadline for CD entries: September 26, 2013. For prospectus, go to: [www.lsu.edu/union](http://www.lsu.edu/union). Mail: LSU Union Art Gallery, LSU Box 25123, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803. Email: [unionartgallery@lsu.edu](mailto:unionartgallery@lsu.edu).

**CALL FOR ARTISTS! Announcing the 5th Annual Juried Art Show PRINCE STREET GALLERY** announces a National juried exhibition Jan 28-Feb 22, 2014 for artists working two-dimensionally. Entry fee: \$35; Deadline: Nov. 5, 2013. For application and prospectus, download at [www.princestreetgallery.org](http://www.princestreetgallery.org) 530 West 25th St, NY, NY 10001. Juror: LOIS DODD

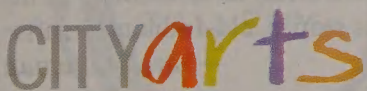
**NEW YORK, NY: Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club, Inc.** 117th Annual Open Juried Exhibition at the National Arts Club, NY. October 1 - 25, 2013. Open to women artists. Media: Oil, Acrylic, Watercolor, Pastel, Graphics, and Sculpture. Over \$10,000 in awards. Entry Fee: \$35/Members and Associates, \$40/Non-Members. Online entry deadline is July 8, 2013. Submit your entries at [www.onlinejuriedshows.com](http://www.onlinejuriedshows.com). For prospectus, send SASE to Okki Whang, 431 Woodbury Road, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724 or download prospectus at [www.clwac.org](http://www.clwac.org).

**REFINED VIII: Maker's Choice** is a biennial juried exhibition of jewelry and metalwork hosted by the School of Art at Stephen F. Austin State University. This year's juror is Cindi Strauss, curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The exhibition is held at the Cole Art Center @ The Old Opera House, 329 E. Main Street, Nacogdoches, Texas. Application deadline: Saturday, December 9, 2013. Submissions must be made online at (<https://www.callforentry.org/>) [https://www.callforentry.org/festivals\\_unique\\_info.php?ID=1487](https://www.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=1487) Questions? 936-468-1131. Exhibition Dates: January 24 - March 30, 2014.

<p><b>L &gt; M</b> less is more <small>small works in a great space</small></p>	<p><b>National Juried Exhibition: The Mitchell Gallery</b> ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, ANNAPOLIS, MD</p>
<p><b>Less is More: Small Works in a Great Space</b></p> <p>Accepting entries in all media. \$2,000 Cash awards. Juror: Domenic Iacono, Director, Syracuse University Art Galleries. Entry cost: \$40 for up to three JPEGs. Submission deadline: February 2, 2014. To read the <i>Less is More</i> exhibition prospectus: <a href="http://themitchellgallery.org/prospectus.php">http://themitchellgallery.org/prospectus.php</a></p>	

# PIECES FOR PEACE

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***Behind the Walls #5, 2011, a digital chromogenic print, veers between reality and illusion.***

In the 1840s, the newborn medium of photography experienced a period of explosive creativity. Enthusiasts discovered they could make negatives on metal, glass, and paper, using materials ranging from fermented egg whites to tar. One could create a collage by sandwiching together two negatives, or use a stereoscope to achieve the illusion of three dimensions. The potential seemed limitless.

For Italian-born photographer Paolo Ventura, the current digital revolution recalls that early era of photography. “Digital technology has opened the door of fantasy and imagination,” he says. “It’s like being a painter and someone gives you a bag, and inside there’s a completely new color.”

The 45-year-old artist is something of a master illusionist, a photographer who creates elaborate stories out of the simplest materials. Each of his images starts with a diorama of a little city or interior that he crafts himself, painstakingly detailing it to look weathered. He then adds dolls, props, and other elements and goes on to photograph the scene. The result is mysterious and occasionally surreal—a hybrid that veers between the sharpness of reality and the strange logic of dreams.

Ventura has always been steeped in storytelling. His father, a children’s book author, would regale the family with tales as they sat around the dinner table. His eccentric grandmother, who used to take the artist with her to dress corpses for burial, told him anecdotes about World War II.

Ventura, who graduated from Milan’s Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in 1991, spent ten years as a fashion photographer before realizing “there was no life, no story in anything I was making.” So in 2001, he decided to move to Brooklyn, where he began constructing dioramas inside a closet. “What I was seeing in the diorama,” he says, “was exactly what I had in my mind, and that made me very happy.”



**Paolo Ventura.**

Unlike the artists Thomas Demand and James Casebere, who also construct and photograph dioramas, Ventura works with narratives that unfold over a series of images. His first series, “War Souvenir” (2005), is based on his grandmother’s wartime memories; “The Automaton” (2010) sets a whimsical, Pinocchio-like story against the gritty reality of Venice’s Jewish ghetto in 1943. Within this work, each image is its own little mystery, filled with character and atmosphere and detail that beg for closer examination. Ventura is represented by Hasted Kraeutler Gallery in New York, where his individual images sell for between \$5,000 and \$10,000, depending on the print size.

In the series “Behind the Walls” (2011), Ventura enters his own fantasy worlds as an actor. Photoshop allows him to play every part in his imagined scenes. It’s like a “new color” in his palette. But if digital technology has made Ventura the star of his stories, old-fashioned craftsmanship and narrative bring them to life.

**—Sarah Coleman**

*Sarah Coleman is an arts critic, fiction writer, and blogger at [TheLiterateLens.com](http://TheLiterateLens.com).*





# ALFONSO OSSORIO

## Blood Lines, 1949–1953

September 7 to October 26

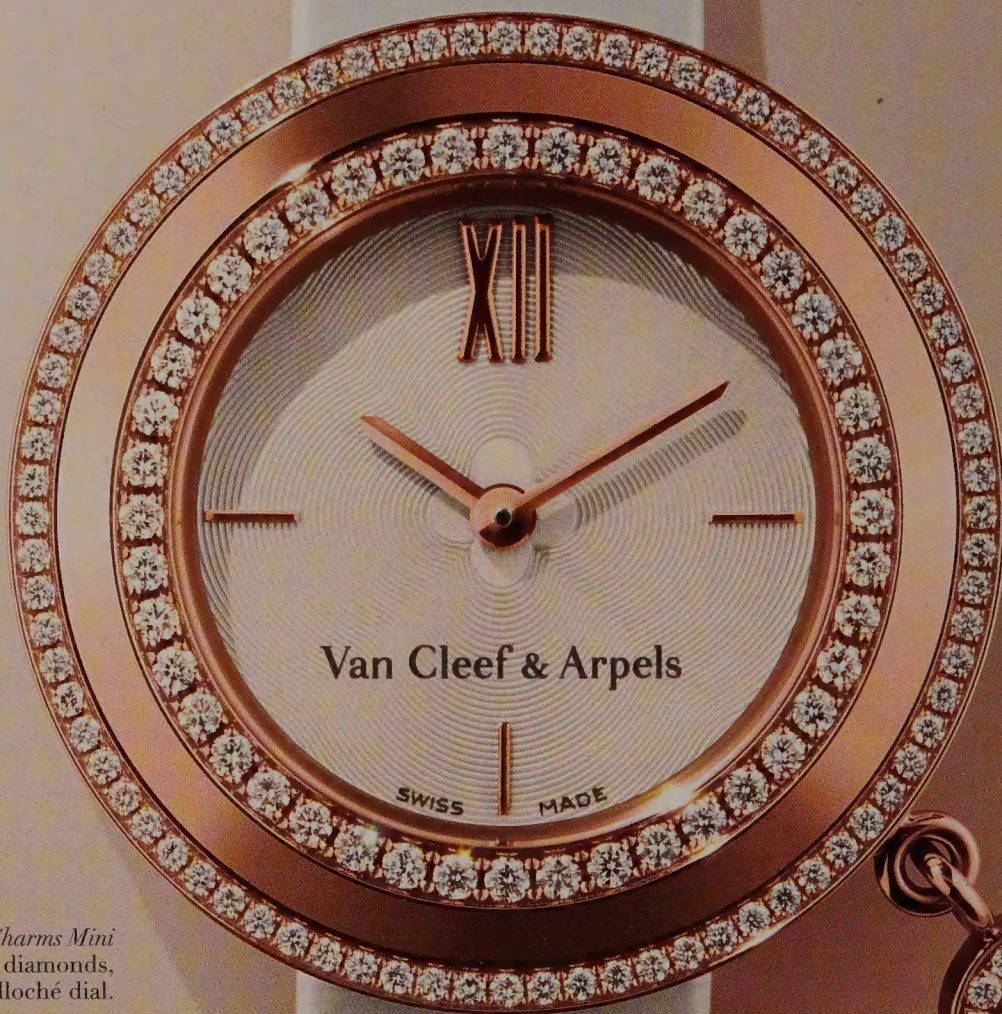
This exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated color catalog with essays by Kent Minturn and Michael Solomon.



Alfonso Ossorio (1916-1990), *Blood Lines* (detail), 1953-54, oil on canvas, 77 x 51¼ inches, signed



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